Tanong ng Bayan / A27

Dagdag sa VAT: Kailangan nga ba?

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■ **Metro / A23**

Suspects in Vidamo slay nabbed

■ **Entertainment / A2-1**

Murder mystery at the Inquirer

Mercury Drug celebrates 60 years of helping keep the nation healthy. More on Pages 9, 11, 12 and 13

See BPI Special Section to find out what's in store for you in 2005

DENR pushes limited logging operations

By Volt Contreras

LIMIT logging operations to two or three regions.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is pushing for this scheme for possible implementation in the Caraga region and the Davao provinces in Mindanao, according to

DENR/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Filipino couples just 'do it,' survey shows

By Blanche S. Rivera

"BIRDS do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it," goes the popular Cole Porter song.

In the Philippines,

FILIPINO/ A21

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Tuesday, March 1, 2005 ★★★ 54 pages / 5 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 83 P18

website: www.inq7.net

House OKs lifting of VAT exemptions

GMA urges Congress to approve '05 budget

By Cynthia D. Balana, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Norman Bordadora

THE HOUSE of Representatives approved late last night the lifting of the value-added tax exemptions on certain goods and services in a bid to raise additional revenues for the government.

Voting 156-30 with three abstentions, the House approved staggered VAT rates for power and petroleum products which used to be VAT exempt – 4 percent in the first year, 6 percent in the second, 8 percent in the third and 12 percent in the fourth.

Liquefied petroleum gas and pandesal will continue to be VAT-exempt, while sardines, noodles and mackerel will be slapped a 6-percent VAT.

Lawyers and doctors, on the other hand, will be imposed a 10-percent VAT but this could be waived if they serve indigent people. As such, they should present a certification from the proper agencies as proof that they had provided services to poor and marginalized people.

Earlier, in a rare display of displeasure toward Congress, President Macapagal-Arroyo urged senators and members of the House of Representatives to swiftly pass the 2005 national budget and a bill seeking a two-percentage point increase in the value-added tax (VAT) to 12 percent.

"The clock is ticking. There's no time to waste," the President said yesterday in a speech less than two weeks after the country suffered a double-notch downgrade of its sovereign credit ratings.

At a luncheon she hosted for the centennial of the Rotary Club of Manila, the President said she was "fighting for this budget to be

HOUSE/ A22

THE OSCARS made Clint Eastwood's day as he poses with his trophies for best director and best picture. AP

HILARY Swank accepts the award for best actress for her role in "Million Dollar Baby" ... AP

... WHILE Jamie Foxx kisses his for best actor for his role in "Ray." REUTERS

Clint, 'Million Dollar Baby' top Oscars

LOS ANGELES—The Oscars made Clint Eastwood's day, giving the former "Dirty Harry" star best director and best picture awards for his heartbreaking boxing drama, "Million Dollar Baby."

In doing so, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences dealt a body blow to esteemed director Martin Scorsese, who lost his seventh Oscar bid, despite making such celebrated films as "Raging Bull" and "Taxi Driver."

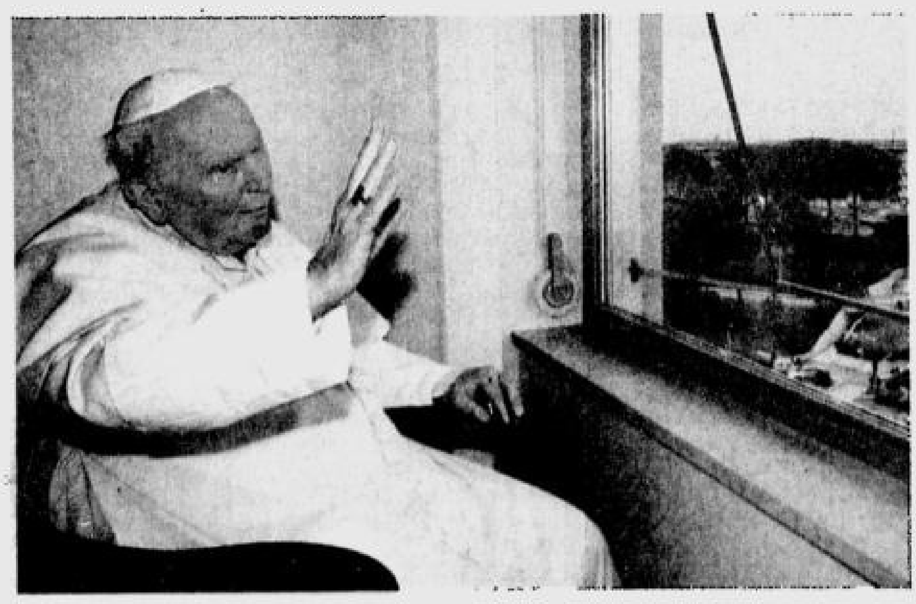
His epic Howard Hughes biopic, "The Aviator," starring Leonardo DiCaprio as the visionary airline executive, claimed five Oscars, including the prize for best supporting actress for Australian Cate Blanchett but no other major awards.

Hilary Swank won the second Oscar of her career for playing a young woman who persuades a grizzled boxing coach, played by Eastwood, to reluctantly train her for a title shot in "Million Dollar Baby."

Morgan Freeman was crowned best supporting actor for his performance as Eastwood's aging sidekick. It was Freeman's first Oscar victory after three previous nominations. He was one of two black actors who triumphed on Sunday night.

Jamie Foxx, as expected, won the best actor award for his work as blind soul singer Ray

CLINT/ A21



POPE John Paul II makes a surprise appearance at his hospital window, his first since undergoing throat surgery last week, to the applause of the crowd outside. AFP

Pope's condition sparks Vatican power struggle

VATICAN CITY—Even as Pope John Paul II appeared to be recovering from acute respiratory ailments, his frail health has triggered a quiet succession scramble that the Pontiff's inner circle would like to keep well out of the public eye.

The world's Catholics were reassured Sunday by the Pope's surprise appearance at a window of Gemelli hospital. But the Vatican's health minister, Mexican Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragan, said the 84-year-old Pope should remain in the hospital as long as necessary for his recovery.

Uncertainty over the condition of John Paul II has sparked an unseemly backroom maneuvering that is specifically forbidden—under threat of excommunication—in his 1996 apostolic constitution. Cardinals who will elect John Paul II's successor are to "abstain from any form of pact, agreement, promise or other commitment of any kind which could oblige them to give or deny their vote."

No one can actively campaign to succeed the Pope, since the cardinals are meant to determine God's choice of representative, and doctrine holds that they are guided by the Holy Spirit when they meet in the Sistine Chapel for the momentous vote.

The electors of the head of the Roman Catholic Church—the spiritual

POPE'S/ A22

115 dead, 148 hurt in Iraq car bombing

HILLA, Iraq—A suicide bomber detonated a car near a crowded marketplace south of Baghdad on Monday, killing 115 people and wounding 148 in the single bloodiest attack in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

The bomber drove a car into a crowd of people queuing outside a government building in the town of Hilla, 100 km south of the capital.

Many of those killed were shopping at stalls across the road.

"A suicide car bomb hit a gathering of people who were applying for work in the security services," the Babil province police said in a statement.

It added that "several people" were arrested. It did not elaborate.

Reuters television footage showed a pile of bloodied bodies outside the building.

Smoke rose from the wreckage of burned-out market stalls as bystanders loaded mangled corpses onto wooden carts, usually used to carry fruit and vegetables.

Others, their limbs ripped to shreds, were piled into the back of pickup trucks. Nearby buildings were pockmarked by shrapnel.

People wept, clutched their heads in despair and shouted, "God is greatest," as rescuers led the wounded away.

"The death toll may rise," an official in Hilla's health directorate told Reuters.

The target of the latest attack appeared to be a crowd of people waiting outside the building to get health certificates needed to apply for government jobs.

Insurgents, fighting to drive

115 DEAD/ A22

Samar folk regain bay's fish bounty

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao
Business

CATBALOGAN, Samar—There was a time only strangers with a death wish dared tread the roads to the remote barangay of San Roque in this town.

Most of the villagers eked out a living from dynamite fishing or by working on the deep sea trawlers that indiscriminately siphoned off the resources of Maqueda Bay, the main fishing resource of the province.

But change is slowly taking place.

From a community that once damaged corals with no regard for tomorrow, it is now home to one of the most dynamic and aggressive cooperatives.

Members have traded in their sticks of dynamite and work on the trawlers for a chance to earn a decent living by raising snapper and other commercial fish varieties in cages.

"Nobody really wanted to engage in dynamite fishing because it is dangerous. But people did it anyway because they thought they had no choice," said Gina Ocenar, head of the San Roque Mauswagon Cooperative.

With alternatives now before them, many have left their illegal fishing days behind.

Interested members of

SAMAR/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/01/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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We saw Dennis, Suzette, say 4 cops

They're not sure, says Roldan lawyer

By Christian V. Esguerra

FOUR policemen have executed a joint affidavit saying they saw a man who "appeared to be" ex-Congressman Dennis Roldan going to a place in Quezon City where a kidnapped Chinese-Filipino boy was being held.

They said the man was accompanied by another man and a female who was later identified as Suzette See Wang, purported to be Roldan's girlfriend.

The statement was executed by officers involved in the capture of Roldan and six other suspects for the alleged kidnapping of the 3-year-old boy in Pasig City.

The affidavit appeared in part to back a separate statement issued by another suspect, Albert Pagdanganan, linking the former lawmaker to the kidnapping.

Roldan's lawyer Salvador Panelo, who released the policemen's affidavit to the INQUIRER, claimed differently.

Panelo described as "weak and full of loopholes" the statement executed by officers of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) team.

Panelo said that if indeed, the policemen were sure it was his client who was seen at the West Avenue house, they should have categorically named him instead of using the phrase "appeared to be."

"This only shows their uncertainty," Panelo said.

The affidavit was executed by Supt. Antonio Bartolome, Senior Insp. Aldrin Juaneza, PO2 Zaldy Montero and PO2 Christine Prado of Pacer.

Second affidavit

A second joint affidavit was executed by their Pacer comrades, Senior Inspectors Ali Jose Duterte, Santos Sumingwa Jr. and Joseph Elmer Bullong, Insp. Jonel Guadalupe, PO3 Norman Corpuz and PO2 Moises Abastilla.

In their affidavit, Bartolome and his men said:

"We noticed two male and one female persons visited said place on board a Corolla with plate number WKE-486, color metallic violet.

"One of the male persons appeared to be a movie actor and a former congressman of Quezon City, identified as Dennis Roldan, while the two were later identified as Capt. Octavio Garces and Suzette Wang."

Garces is one of the seven people now in police custody.

The Pacer officers pinpointed the place as No. 32 Zamboanga St., West Avenue, Quezon City, and said the Roldan group visited it Feb. 17, or two days before the boy was rescued.

Suspect Pagdanganan had said in his own affidavit that it was in that place where the kidnap gang had first brought the boy after abducting him.

Bartolome and company said that earlier, they had "noticed that a group of persons were coming in and out" of the place.

They said the persons were later identified as Pagdanganan, "Noel San Adress, Rowena San Andress, Adrian Domingo and Romeo Arcajada."

A police statement issued after the rescue of the boy identified among those arrested as "Noel San Andres" and "Rowena Prado y San Andres."

SIM card

The Bartolome group's statement was corroborated by a separate affidavit jointly executed by Duterte's group, who arrested Roldan at his house on Feb. 20.

Part of the items seized from Roldan was a mobile phone SIM card (0928-6100840) he had purportedly used in demanding ransom from the boy's family, according to Duterte and his men's affidavit.

Panelo faxed to the INQUIRER a statement from Roldan's wife, Teresa, in support of her husband.

"It is very hurtful for us to hear all the allegations against him," Teresa wrote. "I say allegations because many information have been bandied around as fact without supporting proof to substantiate these claims. We beg you to take caution because it is a person's life that is at stake."

Miriam seeks probe of Coastal Road deal

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago yesterday sought a Senate probe and the filing of plunder charges against the people and government agencies behind the operation of the Manila-Cavite Coastal Road for their alleged involvement in a scam that reportedly cost the government P2.52 billion in losses from the collection of toll fees.

In a privilege speech, Santiago said the alleged scam involved the Coastal Road Corp. which "was able to insinuate itself as a partner in the Coastal Road project, without using any money of its own and without a track record in operating a toll facility."

"It did not undergo the competitive bidding process mandated by law, but bought out the Malaysian investors, using the proceeds of a bank loan, which it paid with another bank loan," Santiago said.

She said CRC came into the picture after it acquired the ownership rights held by two Malaysian companies that had merged to manage the road project as the United Engineers Malaysia-Mara Philippines Corp.

But in 1999, she said, the transfer of ownership to CRC was "quietly suspicious and apparently fraudulent" as she noted that CRC bought the shares of the Malaysian company by borrowing money from Metrobank. It plans to repay the loan for a 90-percent share of the company from income from the Coastal Road.

GMA supporting moves to review oil deregulation law

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.,
Cynthia D. Balana
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is supporting moves to review the oil deregulation law which her Cabinet has blamed for the government's inability to check indiscriminate oil price increases by petroleum companies.

"I think it's good to review it," the President said in a press conference in Tanauan, Batangas, after gracing groundbreaking rites for the new Honda manufacturing plant.

"But we should not preempt the findings of the team," she added, declining to state her position on the nine-year-old deregulation law.

Ms Arroyo was referring to a five-member review committee formed by outgoing energy secretary Vincent Perez after oil companies raised pump prices of diesel and gasoline by 60 centavos.

The country's major transportation groups have been banging on the doors of Malacañang to either repeal or review the oil deregulation law which has practically allowed the oil companies to set the price of petroleum products in the country.

Her administration, however, has used the oil deregulation law as an excuse for the government's inability to influence the domestic price of oil although consumer-oriented groups, such as the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, have openly questioned the justification of the oil companies' price adjustments.

The members of the committee are former chairman of SGV and former Commissioner of the Energy Regulatory Commission Charlie Alindada; Independent Petroleum Dealers in the Philippines president Merceditas Garcia; Confederation of Land Transport Group of the Philippines secretary general Bert Suansing; University of Asia and the Pacific professor and industry expert Peter Lee; and former Trade and Industry Undersecretary Joey Leviste.

The committee has 90 days to study the law and make recommendations to the President.

Meanwhile, Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers yesterday urged the government to buy back Petron's 11 percent share which is being traded in the stock market.

Barbers made the proposal following reports the Big 3 oil firms—Petron, Pilipinas Shell Corp. and Caltex Philippines—had increased gasoline and diesel prices by 60 centavos and 5 centavos per liter, respectively.

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Outbound Stream: Leaning the Outbound Supply Chain
Speaker: Brett Marshall, Zuellig Pharma

Inbound Stream: Supply Chain Solutions that integrates manufacturers and retailers
Speaker: Gody Dolor, Supply Chain Solutions

Internal Stream: Effective Management of Trade-Offs for Successful Supply Chain Management
Speaker: Miguel Angel Camahort, 2GO Solutions of Aboitiz

Inbound Stream: The Green Supply Chain - Integrating Suppliers into the Environmental Management Processes
Speaker: Jesus Reyes, Nestle Phils., Inc.

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Speaker: Barry Elliott, Consultant, Manila

For registration and inquiries, please contact Thess Rañon at 634-6632; 638-4024; 634-5955; 634-5942 e-mail: thess@pism.org or log on to www.pism.org

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Abadilla 5 asks SC to recall case

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE ABADILLA 5 has asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision sending its plea to have its members' death sentences overturned to the Court of Appeals.

In a five-page motion filed on Feb. 24, Lenido Lumanog, SPO2 Cesar Fortuna, Joel de Jesus, Rameses de Jesus and Augusto Santos asked the high tribunal to recall their case from the appellate court.

While the transfer to the CA could lead to a new trial, the appellants said they were willing to "risk" proceeding with the Supreme Court's automatic review of their case.

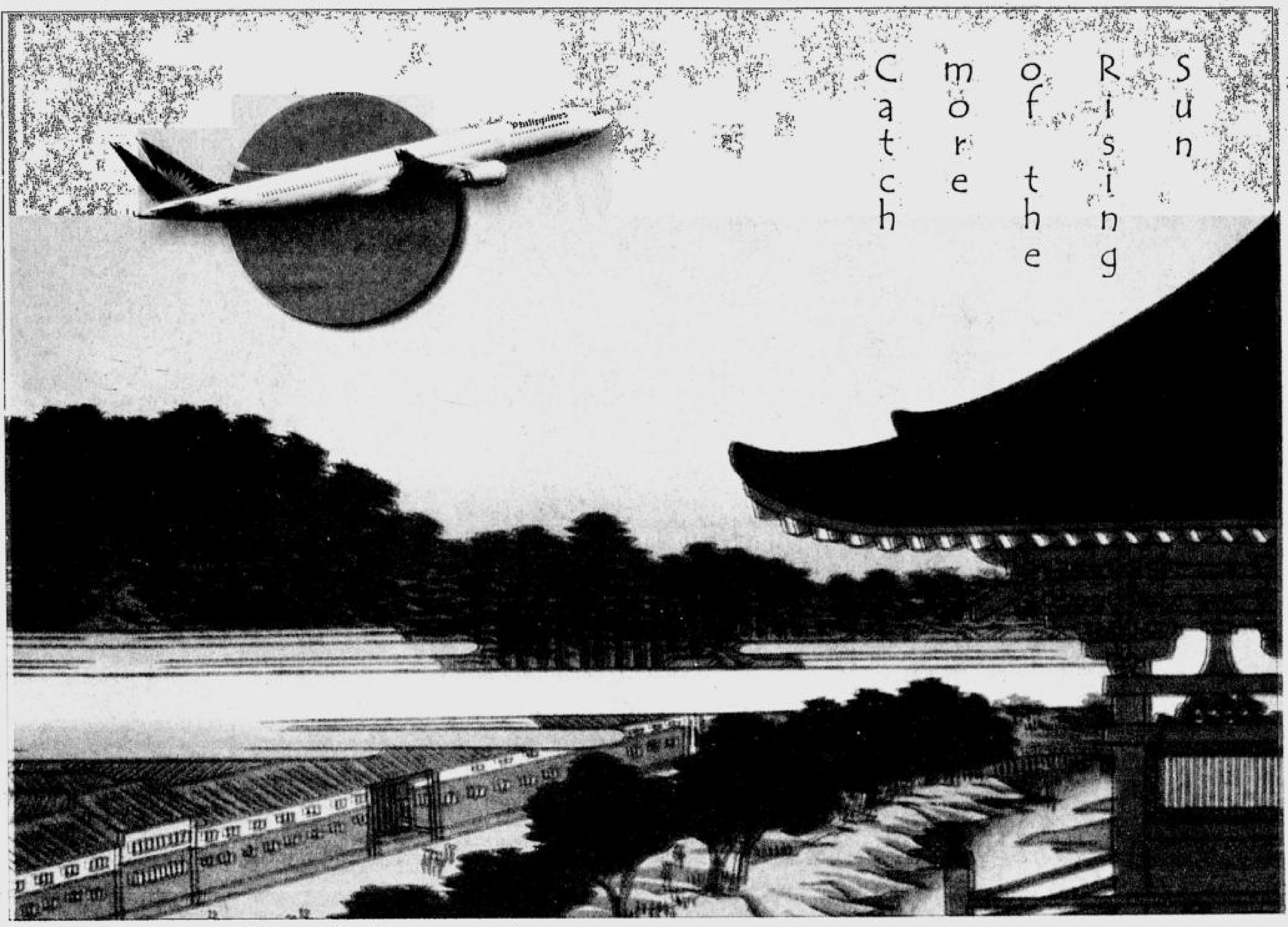
"Time and certainty are now more valuable even than life is to them," the motion said.

"The transfer of this case to the CA will result in undue delay and expense which the accused-appellants wish to avoid at this point. It entails starting from scratch in terms of studying the voluminous records of this case," it said.

The Abadilla 5 was convicted of the June 1996 murder of Col. Rolando Abadilla but the appellants claimed they were tortured by the police into confessing to the crime.

The appellants said transferring their petition to the appellate court could mean another delay of five years before their case is resolved.

"And if for some reason (like affirmation of conviction), this case is elevated again to the SC for final disposition, the probably new (by that time) composition of the SC would have to study it again before finally deciding it in another five years," they said.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Offer Period
March 2 to 9, 2005

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Offer Period: March 2 to 8, 2005

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The Program is for eligible local investors subscribing to a minimum of 1,000 Offer Shares and whose Application will not exceed P25,000.00. You may cut-out and use the Application Form published herein, accomplish 4 copies and submit them together with the required attachments and check payment to any PSE Trading Participant/Stockbroker on or before 10:00 am of 8 March 2005, together with signature cards that you may secure from any PSE Trading Participant/Stockbroker. Multiple applications received from a single investor will automatically be rejected. For details, contact any PSE Trading Participant/Stockbroker, BPI Capital Corporation or the Public Information and Assistance Center of the Philippine Stock Exchange (tel. no. 688-7600 or 819-4100). A prospectus relating to the offer as well as the complete directory of Selling Agents may be viewed at www.pse.com.ph.

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The Trading Participants of the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc. (PSE)

The foregoing does not constitute an offer of securities for sale in the United States, and the Common Shares may not be offered or sold in the United States absent registration or an exemption from registration. Manila Water Company, Inc. does not intend to register any portion of the offering in the United States or to conduct a public offering in the United States. Any public offering of securities to be made in the United States will be by means of a prospectus that may be obtained from Manila Water and that will contain detailed information about Manila Water and management, as well as financial statements.

THIS APPLICATION MUST BE PREPARED IN QUADRUPLICATE AND COMPLETED IN ALL PARTS	
Copy 1	Applicant
Copy 2	Stock Transfer Agent/Issuer
Copy 3	Underwriter/PSE Trading Participant
Copy 4	Receiving Copy

Manila Water

Primary and Secondary Offer of Common Shares with Par Value of ₱1.00 per share at an Offer Price of ₱6.50 per share

APPLICATION NO.

This Application Form, together with the signature card, check payment and all required attachments, must be received by the Trading Participant of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) not later than 10:00 in the morning in the case of applicants under the Small Investors Program and 11:00 in the morning in the case of clients of PSE Trading Participants both on March 8, 2005, and not later than 11:00 in the morning on March 9, 2005, if filed directly with a Domestic Underwriter. Applications received thereafter, not duly accomplished, or without the attachments specified below, will be rejected. This Application to Purchase and Subscribe form is irrevocable and, once duly accomplished and submitted, may not be withdrawn by the applicant. The Company, through the Domestic Lead Underwriter, shall have the unrestricted and unqualified right to accept or reject this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of oversubscription, the Company, Selling Shareholders, and / or the Domestic Lead Underwriter reserve the right to allocate the Offer Shares available to the applicants in a manner they deem appropriate. Applicants are advised to read the Prospectus before subscribing to and / or purchasing the Offer Shares. Copies of the Prospectus are made available through any of the Domestic Underwriters listed in the Prospectus, any PSE Trading Participant, the PSE and the main and extension offices of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Capitalized terms used herein shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the Prospectus.

APPLICATION TO PURCHASE AND SUBSCRIBE

I / We hereby purchase and / or subscribe to Manila Water Company, Inc. ("Manila Water Company" or the "Company") Offer Shares under the Terms and Conditions stated herein and in the Prospectus for the Offer of such shares, as follows:

NUMBER OF SHARES	PRICE PER SHARE	TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE (Number of Shares x Price per Share)
	₱ 6.50	

Number of shares must be for a minimum of 1,000 shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 1,000 shares. The subscription and / or purchase of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon the actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE.

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid in full upon submission of the Application. Payments should be made by a check drawn against a bank in Metro Manila payable to the order of "Manila Water Company Public Offer". The check must be dated as of the date of the Application and crossed for deposit.

TYPE OF CHECK ☐ Personal ☐ Corporate ☐ Manager's / Cashier's	BANK / BRANCH	
	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT

WARRANTY

I / We represent and warrant that all information contained herein and in the attached documents are true and correct. I / We warrant having read and understood and relied solely upon the provisions of the Prospectus and the terms and conditions stated herein, and unconditionally accept said terms and conditions. I / We understand that no person has been authorized to give information or to make any representation with respect to the Offer Shares other than those specified in the Prospectus.

APPLICANT'S FULL NAME (IN PRINT)		DATE
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE	TELEPHONE NUMBER	NATIONALITY
APPLICANT'S MAILING ADDRESS		TAX IDENTIFICATION NO.

PDTC LODGMENT / DELIVERY OF STOCK CERTIFICATES

With regard to the Offer Shares subject of this Application (the "applied Offer Shares"), an eligible Applicant shall have the choice (by checking the box of his choice below) of either (i) lodging all of the applied Offer Shares with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. (PDTC) or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such Offer Shares. Should an Applicant choose to lodge such Offer Shares with the PDTC, he should indicate so below and complete the additional information required below. Should an Applicant choose to receive a stock certificate evidencing his ownership in the applied Offer Shares, the stock certificate will then be issued and made available by the Stock Transfer Agent for pick-up by the requesting Applicant at least THREE (3) TRADING DAYS AFTER THE LISTING DATE. THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW. THE APPLICANT'S FAILURE TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW, OR THE PROVISION OF INCOMPLETE OR FALSE INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO THE APPLICANT'S CHOICE AS REQUIRED HEREIN MAY LEAD TO THE AUTOMATIC ISSUANCE OF STOCK CERTIFICATES, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS DESCRIBED BELOW, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE RIGHT OF THE COMPANY, SELLING SHAREHOLDER AND / OR DOMESTIC LEAD UNDERWRITER TO REJECT OR SCALE DOWN EACH APPLICATION.

☐ I / We want to have the applied Offer Shares lodged with the PDTC through the PDTC Participant indicated below and warrant that I / we am / are a client of such PDTC Participant

☐ I / We want to request for a stock certificate for the applied Offer Shares

In case no choice has been indicated, the Applicant shall be deemed to have chosen, by default, to have a stock certificate for the applied Offer Shares.

Additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares (to be completed with the assistance of the PDTC Participant appointed by the Applicant)	We confirm that we are a PDTC Participant and that the Applicant named in this Application is our *bona fide* client.
PDTC Participant Firm and PDTC Code / PDTC Sub Account Code	Authorized Signature(s) and Stamp of PDTC Participant

NOT TO BE FILLED UP BY APPLICANT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

This Application Form was received:		
Name of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Signature of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Date

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE

The Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant hereby CONFIRMS that it has SOLD unto the above-named Applicant, all of the rights, titles and interests over the following applied Offer Shares:

Total Number of Shares	Total Purchase Price	Amount of Refund, if any
Application accepted by:		
Name of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Signature of Underwriter / PSE Trading Participant	Date

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

1. Corresponding check payment
2. One fully executed signature card in the form attached to this Application.
    a) Applicants may obtain signature cards from PSE Trading Participants or Domestic Underwriters
3. If the applicant is a Corporation, Partnership, Trust Account or Fund, this Application must be accompanied by the following documents:
    a) Copy of the applicant's latest Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws and other constitutive documents as amended (if applicable);
    b) Copy of the applicant's SEC Certificate of Registration; and
    c) A duly notarized certificate of the applicant's corporate secretary which (1) sets out the resolutions of the applicant's Board of Directors authorizing the purchase of the Offer Shares applied for and specifying the authorized signatories for the purpose, (2) certifies the percentage of the applicant's capital stock held by non-Filipinos, and (3) includes specimen signatures of the designated authorized signatories.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Combined Offer. Manila Water Company, Inc. and the Selling Shareholders, through the Lead Underwriters, are offering up to 745,350,000 Offer Shares with a par value of ₱1.00 per share. Of the Offer Shares, up to 274,352,000 shares are being offered for subscription in the Philippines by the Domestic Underwriters and up to 470,998,000 shares are being offered for subscription outside the Philippines by the sole International Underwriter. Ayala Corporation, United Utilities and BPI Capital have granted the International Underwriter an option, exercisable within 30 days from the Listing Date, to purchase up to an additional 78,490,000 Common Shares to cover over-allotments.

Offer Price. The Offer Shares are being offered at a price of ₱6.50 as indicated at the front of this Application to Purchase and Subscribe Form.

Domestic Offer Period. The Domestic Offer Period shall commence on 2 March 2005 and end on 9 March 2005. The Company and Domestic Lead Underwriter reserve the right to extend or terminate the Domestic Offer Period with the approval of the SEC and the PSE. Applications must be received by the Domestic Receiving Bank not later than 11:00 a.m. Manila Time on 8 March 2005 if filed through a Domestic Selling Agent, or not later than 11:00 a.m. 9 March 2005 if filed directly with a Domestic Underwriter. Applications received thereafter or without the required documents will be rejected. Applications shall be considered irrevocable upon submission to the Domestic Selling Agent or Domestic Underwriter, and shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Offer as stated in the Prospectus and in this Application. The actual subscription and / or purchase of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon the actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE.

Minimum Subscription. Each Application must be for a minimum of 1,000 Offer Shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 1,000 Offer Shares. No Application for multiples of any other number of shares shall be considered. In case an application fails to indicate the applied Offer Shares in multiples of 1,000, the entire application shall be rejected.

Listing and Trading. The Company's application for the listing of the Common Shares was approved by the PSE on 9 February 2005. All of the common shares in issue or to be issued including the Offer Shares are expected to be listed on the PSE on 18 March 2005. Trading is expected to commence on the same date.

Eligible Investors. The Offer Shares may be subscribed and / or purchased by any person of legal age who may be either a Philippine or non-Philippine citizen residing in the Philippines, or any corporation, association, partnership, trust account, fund or entity resident in and organized under the laws of the Philippines and / or licensed to do business in the Philippines, subject to the unrestricted and unqualified right of the Company to reject an Application or reduce the number of Offer Shares applied for subscription or purchase if the same will cause the Company to be in breach of the Philippine ownership requirement under the Concession Agreement. Subscription to the Offer Shares in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Foreign investors interested in subscribing or purchasing the Offer Shares should inform themselves of the applicable legal requirements under the laws and regulations of the countries of their nationality, residence or domicile, and as to any relevant tax or foreign exchange control laws and regulations affecting them personally. Foreign investors, both corporate and individual, hereby warrant that their purchase of the Offer Shares will not violate the laws of their jurisdiction and that they are allowed to acquire, purchase and hold the Offer Shares.

Restrictions on Ownership. Under the Concession Agreement, the Company represents and warrants to MWSS that at least 60% of its outstanding voting capital stock is owned by citizens of the Philippines or by corporations that are themselves at least 60% owned by citizens of the Philippines. The Concession Agreement also states that MWSS has determined to grant concessions to private sector corporations at least 60% of the outstanding capital stock of which is owned and controlled by Philippine nationals ("Philippine nationals" and persons referred to in the preceding sentence, "Philippine Nationals"). Accordingly, the Company has the right to disallow the issuance or the transfer of shares to persons other than Philippine Nationals and to record transfers in the books of the Company if such issuance or transfer would cause a breach of the contractual restriction on foreign ownership.

Procedure for Application. Application forms to subscribe for Offer Shares in the Domestic Offer may be obtained from any Domestic Underwriter or Domestic Selling Agent listed in the Prospectus. All Applications shall be evidenced by the application to subscribe and purchase form, duly executed in each case by an authorized signatory of the applicant and accompanied by one completed signature card, the corresponding payment for the Offer Shares covered by the Application and all other required documents. The duly executed Application and required documents should be submitted during the Domestic Offer Period to the same office where it was obtained.

Requirements for Corporate Applicants. If the applicant is a corporation, partnership, trust account or fund, the Application must be accompanied by the required documents indicated above.

Payment Terms. The Offer Shares must be paid in full upon submission of the Application. Payment should be made by a check drawn against a bank in Metro Manila to the order of "Manila Water Company Public Offer". The check must be dated as of the date of submission of the Application and crossed for deposit.

Acceptance / Rejection of Applications. The actual number of Offer Shares that an applicant will be allowed to subscribe for in the Domestic Offer is subject to the confirmation of the Domestic Underwriters. Applications shall be subject to the final approval of the Company. The Company shall have the unrestricted and unqualified right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, or reduce any Application due to any grounds specified in the Domestic Underwriting Agreement entered into by the Company, the Selling Shareholders and the Domestic Underwriters. Applications where checks are dishonored upon first presentation and Applications which do not comply with the terms of the Domestic Offer shall be rejected. Moreover, any payment received pursuant to the Application does not mean approval or acceptance by the Company of the Application. An Application, when accepted, shall constitute an agreement between the applicant and the Company for the subscription to the Offer Shares at the time, in the manner and subject to terms and conditions set forth in the Application and those described in the Prospectus. Notwithstanding the acceptance of any Application by the Domestic Underwriters or their duly authorized representatives, acting for or on behalf of the Company, the actual subscription and / or purchase by the applicant of the Offer Shares shall become effective only upon actual listing of the Offer Shares on the PSE and upon the obligations of the Domestic Underwriters and Domestic Selling Agents under the Domestic Underwriting Agreement and Domestic Purchase Agreement becoming unconditional and not being suspended, terminated or cancelled, on or before the Listing Date, in accordance with the provision of the said agreements. If such conditions have not been fulfilled on or before the periods provided above, all application payments will be returned to the applicants without interest and, in the meantime, the said application payments will be held in a separate bank account with the Domestic Receiving Bank.

Refunds. In the event that the number of Offer Shares to be received by an applicant, as confirmed by the Domestic Underwriters, is less than the number covered by this Application, or if an Application is rejected by the Company, then the Company shall refund, without interest, within five (5) Banking Days from the end of the Domestic Offer Period, all, or a portion of the payment corresponding to the number of Offer Shares wholly or partially rejected. All refunds shall be made through the Domestic Underwriter or Domestic Selling Agent with whom the applicant has filed the Application at the latter's risk.

Issuance and Transfer Taxes. All documentary stamp taxes applicable to the original issuance of the Offer Shares and standard transfer taxes applicable to the sale of the treasury shares by the Company shall be for the sole account of the Company. The standard transfer taxes applicable to the sale of shares by the Selling Shareholders pursuant to the secondary offer shall be for the account of the Selling Shareholders.

Registration and Lodgment of Shares with the PDTC. Applicants will have a choice of either (i) lodging all of their Offer Shares with the PDTC or (ii) requesting for the issuance of a stock certificate evidencing ownership of such Offer Shares. Should an applicant choose to lodge the Offer Shares with the PDTC, he or she must indicate so in the space provided in the Application and provide the additional information required for the PDTC-lodged Offer Shares, in which event, the Offer Shares will be lodged with the PDTC at least two (2) Trading Days prior to the Listing Date. Should an applicant decide to receive stock certificates evidencing their investment in the Offer Shares, the stock certificates will then be issued and made available by the Stock Transfer Agent not later than three (3) Trading Days after Listing Date. Stock certificates that remain unclaimed for a period of thirty (30) days from notice of availability of the certificates shall be dispatched by mail at the risk of the applicant. Any expense to be incurred in and only in such initial issuance of certificates shall be borne by the Company.

Restriction on Issuance and Disposal of Shares. Existing stockholders who own an equivalent of at least ten percent (10%) of the issued and outstanding common shares of the Company after the Combined Offer have agreed, as required under the Revised Listing Rules of the Exchange applicable to companies applying for listing in the PSE First Board, not to sell, assign or otherwise dispose of their common shares for a minimum period of one hundred eighty (180) days after the Listing Date. Ayala is covered by the aforesaid lock-up requirement. This lock-up does not apply to the shares subject to the over-allotment option. Except for the issuance of Offer Shares pursuant to the Combined Offer or common shares under the company's stock option plans and for distribution of common shares by way of stock dividends, the PSE will require the Company, as a condition to the listing of the common shares, not to issue new shares in its capital or grant any rights to or issue any securities convertible into or exchangeable for, or otherwise carrying rights to acquire or subscribe to, any shares in its capital or enter into any arrangement or agreement whereby any new shares or any such securities may be issued for a period of 180 days after the Listing Date. Additionally, the Company, Ayala, United Utilities and BPI Capital have each agreed with the International Underwriters that, other than in connection with the Over-Allotment Option, the Executive Stock Option Plan ("Executive SOP") Shares, and up to 1.4 million Common Shares under any other employee plan of the Company, for a period of 180 days following the Listing Date, they will not, without the written consent of the International Underwriter offer, sell or otherwise dispose of any securities of the same class as the Common Shares or any securities convertible or exchangeable for any securities of the same class as the Common Shares.

Registration of Foreign Investments. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas requires that investments in shares of stock funded by inward remittance of foreign currency be registered with the BSP if the foreign exchange needed to service capital repatriation or dividend remittance will be sourced from the domestic banking system. The registration with the BSP of all foreign investments in the Offer Shares shall be the responsibility of the foreign investor.

Warranties by the Purchaser and / or Subscriber in the Domestic Offering with respect to restrictions under US securities regulations. The Purchaser and / or Subscriber in the Domestic Offering hereby warrants that:

(i) it is not in the United States nor is it a "U.S. Person" ("U.S. Person") as defined in Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act") or acting for the account or benefit of a person within the United States or a US Person;

(ii) it understands that the Offer Shares have not been and will not be registered under the US Securities Act or any state or other jurisdiction in the United States and, until 40 days after the latest closing date of the Offer, may not be offered, resold, pledged or transferred within the United States or to, or for the account or benefit of, US Persons except in either case in accordance with Regulation S or Rule 144A under the US Securities Act.

Obligations Limited. The duties and obligations of the Domestic Lead Underwriter shall be determined solely by the express provisions of this Application to Purchase and Subscribe, and the Domestic Lead Underwriter shall not be liable except for the performance of its duties and obligations specifically set forth herein. The Domestic Lead Underwriter makes no representation or warranty nor assumes any obligation and shall be subject to no obligation or liability whatsoever under this Application to Purchase and Subscribe to the subscriber or purchaser or any other person, except that the Domestic Lead Underwriter agrees to perform such obligations and duties as are specifically set forth and undertaken by it herein without gross negligence or willful misconduct. No implied covenants or obligations shall be read into this Application to Purchase and Subscribe against the Domestic Lead Underwriter. The Domestic Lead Underwriter makes no representation or warranty regarding the Company.

Indemnity Clause. Each purchaser and / or subscriber agrees to indemnify and hold the Company, Selling Shareholders and Domestic Lead Underwriter, their subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers and stockholders free and harmless from any and all losses, claims, damages, liabilities and expenses, or actions with respect thereto, arising out of or by virtue of any breach or alleged breach of the purchaser's and / or subscriber's representations, warranties or covenants, or any other matter related to the Domestic Offer. This indemnity undertaking of each purchaser and / or subscriber shall survive and remain in full force and effect notwithstanding completion of the Offer and the complete performance of the other terms and conditions of the Application to Purchase and Subscribe.

Governing Law. This agreement shall be governed by and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

RP PRAYER

Be kind to Filipino illegals

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday urged humane treatment for tens of thousands of Filipino workers facing deportation in an impending crackdown in Malaysia on illegal labor.

An amnesty allowing illegal workers to voluntarily leave Malaysia without charges and punishment ended yesterday. About 300,000 police, officials and volunteers are to start hunting some 500,000 illegal laborers Tuesday in Sabah, Malaysian officials said. *(See related story on Page A10)*

Those arrested face fines or jail time and lashes with a rattan cane. They would be deported after their sentences and barred from ever reentering Malaysia.

An estimated 150,000 Filipinos work illegally in Malaysia's eastern state of Sabah on Borneo island alone, according to the Department of Labor.

"We seek fair and humane treatment of our nationals and we will continue to be vigilant in working with the Malaysian government for this end," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

The departments of foreign affairs and social welfare were working together to protect and search for jobs for Filipinos affected by the Malaysian crackdown, Bunye said in a statement.

Malaysia has agreed to accept illegal Filipino workers if they return home during the amnesty to secure passports and other required papers, Foreign Undersecretary Jose Brillantes said. *Reports from TJ Burgonio, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and AP*

NEWSBRIEFS

Yes, Garcia was a green card holder

MILITARY prosecutors presented yesterday evidence that former military comptroller retired Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia was a holder of a US "green card," or permanent alien registration, while in the active service. In yesterday's proceedings of Garcia's court-martial, the prosecution called to the witness stand Armed Forces of the Philippines Provost Marshal Col. Henry Galarpe. Galarpe, the prosecution's 11th witness, presented before the court documents from the US Department of Homeland Security, coursed through the US Embassy in Manila, which certified that Garcia had acquired a "green card" in 1989. The US revoked his green card last year. The Constitution bars public officials from acquiring immigrant status from any other country.

Alcuin Papa

DOJ gives Honasan 10 more days

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has given former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan 10 more days to answer the coup d'etat charges filed against him, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday. Gonzalez said Honasan would have 10 more days to file his counter-affidavit after a request was directly made to his office for an extension. He declined to name who asked for the extension. Honasan was supposed to file his answer yesterday on his alleged involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Philip C. Tubeza

Suspected drug lords' assets still frozen

THE COURT of Appeals has extended its freeze order on the bank accounts of two suspects in the P1.3-billion drug bust in Cebu last year at the behest of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC). In a five-page resolution dated Feb. 16, the appellate court ordered the accounts of Joseph Yu, alias Joseph Tiu/Ramon Uy Lim, and Allan Yap Garcia in Allied Bank in Cebu frozen until the drug case against them was decided. The court had initially frozen the accounts on Jan. 18. The AMLC had accused Yu and Garcia of using money from their bank accounts to pay for the rent of one of the warehouses in Mandaue City that had been transformed into a shabu laboratory. The two men were among the 11 suspects arrested after government agents raided shabu laboratories in barangays Umapad and Looc in Mandaue City in September 2004. The police confiscated a total of 675 kg of shabu and 75 kg of ephedrine, an ingredient of the illegal drug.

Philip C. Tubeza

ID system to bring more chaos

By Michael Lim Ubac

A NATIONAL identification system will bring more chaos to the electoral process in the country.

This was the contention of the Commission on Elections which questioned the wisdom of imposing a national ID on Filipino citizens.

Testifying before the Senate committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon, Comelec officials said the adoption of a national ID system would indeed facilitate the delivery of basic services and transactions.

But requiring the use of a national ID card to register and vote could compromise the integrity of the poll process, said the position paper written by Commissioner Resurreccion Borra.

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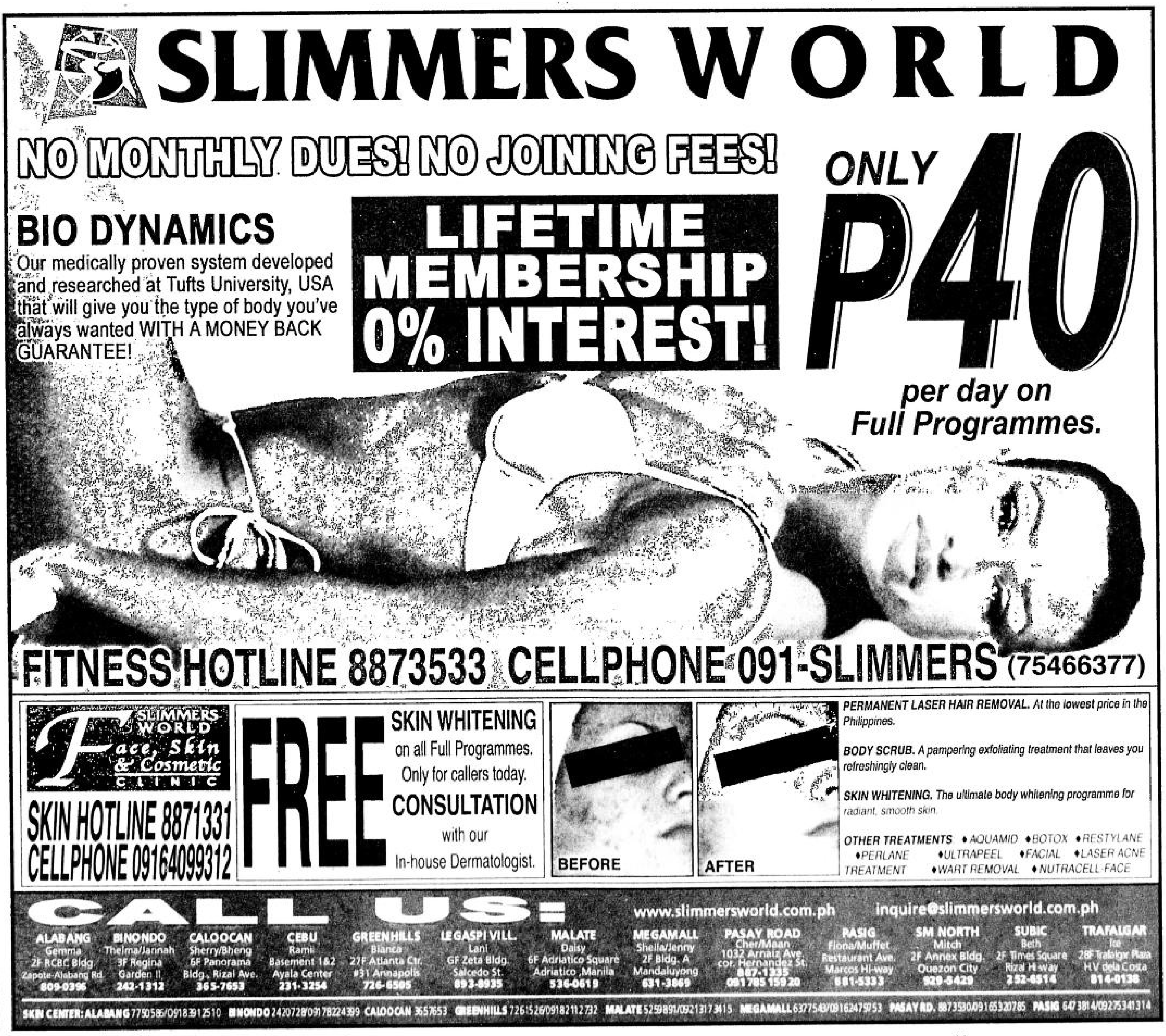
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Samar folk regain bay's fish bounty

From page A1

the cooperative went through the Samar Technology Resource Center's rigorous training and seminars on fish cage operation. In September last year, the cooperative celebrated the first harvest of snapper, which brought in some P18,000 in revenue for its six pioneering members.

Better than illegal fishing

"It was a good income. And now, more cooperative members are encouraged to try out fish cage culture because they realize that it is better than trawling and illegal fishing," Ocenar said in an interview.

The community that once feared the law has started to reach out to sell its produce.

The residents now also dream of a better life for their children, a luxury they did not have before. "We want to provide a good education for their children. That is our primary goal. Engaging in fish cage culture just might provide that for us," Ocenar said.

Friends with earth, again

The alternative source of livelihood was provided by the STRC, which was put up by the Philippine Business for Social Progress to help improve the lot of Samar's poor farmers and fisherfolk, by showing them sustainable ways to earn an income.

The STRC is helping the farmers and fisherfolk in the province, who were among Mother Nature's worst enemies, become friends of the earth again.

Another group benefiting from the renewed friendship is the Cabugawan cooperative.

Nature fights back

Before the group was organized in 1995, most of the barangay residents relied solely on what they could get from Maqueda Bay. But the bay had been abused for so long that Mother Nature fought back, albeit subtly.

Over the years, the produce had dwindled to the point that it could no longer fully support the 14 municipalities that depended on it.

PBSP data showed that Maqueda Bay produced 78,203 metric tons of fish in 1979. By 1991, production was down to 33,600 MT.

In 1981, the bay hosted some 100 marine species of commercial significance. By 1991, the number was down to just 10.

Importance of mangroves

Today, the 94-square-kilometer bay is ranked second only to Manila Bay as the most depleted fishing ground. This spells disaster for Catbalogan, where fishing accounts for 33 percent of the economy.

The Cabugawan residents learned that they contributed to its depletion by uprooting the mangroves that lined their shores in the 1980s.

"We did not know that the fish needed it to survive, that it was important to our livelihood. We used to just use it for firewood or for making Christmas trees," said Adela Abejo, 57, chair of the Cabugawan Cooperative.

She said that through the help of the STRC, with funding from Disop of Belgium, the villagers learned about the importance of mangroves, and that there were other ways to earn a living—ways that did not damage the environment.

Nature's reward

From just fishing, the residents also learned how to process squid into tasty squid chips. Seaweed farming is becoming another major source of income.

The villagers have also become the prime protectors of the vital mangroves they used to carelessly uproot.

Down to almost nothing just a few years back, the mangrove forest they are now tending will soon cover 10 hectares.

A COOPERATIVE member from a remote village of Catbalogan, Samar, inspects her fish cage project. TINA DUMLAO

Nature responded to the efforts to undo the environmental damage by giving back some of the fish that had not been seen in years.

"Now, nobody touches the mangroves. We know now that the mangroves are the homes of the fish. They also protect us against the waves," Abejo said.

Barren forests

Incomes likewise rose from an average of P4,000 as residents reaped the benefits of learning alternative means of livelihood.

Maqueda Bay, unfortunately, is not the only one that suffered from man's abuse. So did Catbalogan's land, which used to be home to thick forests and productive farms.

Logging and hazardous farming practices over the years have taken their toll. The forested land of yesteryears is now barren, with many of the farms left idle, and the cogon growing wild.

Land fertile again

Violy Babon, 48, is showing others how the land can be coaxed to become productive once again.

Three years ago, her land, like many others in Barangay Mahayad, only sprouted cogon grass, which meant that the land had become so acidic from neglect that little else would grow.

Babon was determined to bring her farm back to life, if only to provide food for her family. Her income as a laundrywoman was just not enough to help her husband support their four children.

With her resolve and help from the Department of Agrarian Reform and the PBSP, her farm has become living proof that new technologies in upland farming do work.

After years of applying organic fertilizers to make the soil productive again, and planting trees and vegetables, her farm now teems with *ampalaya*, *okra*, squash, cucumber, eggplants and pepper, which she sells in the market.

An intrepid people

She also learned to plant pineapples along contours to hold the soil and protect the farm from erosion.

Babon even has livestock and poultry to further augment her income.

"We used to plant only cassava, and we did not know anything about soil erosion or conversion of water. Through the training and visits from PBSP people, I now know a lot more," Babon said.

Her family got a lot more, too.

Her younger children are back in school, while the older ones help her in the farm. They have their own house now, and she no longer has to spend hours washing other people's clothes.

Her work is bearing other kinds of fruit.

Farmers around her have picked up on what she has been doing, and are doing their own bit of the new kind of upland farming.

It is the STRC's mission to eventually get all the farmers in Samar to do more for their land, and earn more in the process.

So with the fishermen who, with training and education on the need to protect Maqueda Bay, learn that it is possible to progress economically without sacrificing the environment.

Environmentalists call it sustainable economic development. And the intrepid fishermen and farmers of Catbalogan are proving it.

Corrections

IN THE FEB. 19 issue, the caption of a photo on Page A22 misstated the name of the traffic enforcer who received a new set of dentures from First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's "Bagong Ngiti sa Bagong Bungi." The traffic enforcer was Ricardo Alvino—not Rodrigo Alvino.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a BusinessMonday article on Page B3-3—"Queen City to again host Advertising Congress"—misstated the names of the overall chair and the oversight committee chair of the 19th Philippine Advertising Congress. The overall chair is Meryl Graham Schlachterman of Vigrapost Inc.—not Greg Niles of the Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines. The oversight committee chair is Khalil O. Khodr Jr. of Sell Co (Son et Lumierre)—not Government Media Affairs Secretary Cerge Remonde.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Muntinlupa @ 10

The Eight-Point Program of Governance

EDUCATION AND YOUTH is the focal point of Mayor Jaime Fresnedi's thrust to put Muntinlupa at the forefront as a premier business hub. This is implemented through the construction of additional school buildings; computerization of public schools; scholarship programs for students from elementary to tertiary levels; the strengthening of 67 day care centers benefiting 5,000 children; and the distribution of school bags and other school items, among others.

HEALTH is a priority service of the City Government to Muntinlupeños. This program covers the operation of Ospital ng Muntinlupa, 11 health centers in nine barangays, and the provision of medical services to people who have limited access to medicine.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT lays down infrastructure and policies necessary for growth, such as school buildings, covered courts, multi-purpose halls, the concreting and asphalting of roads, bridges, rehabilitation of drainage systems and installation of pressurized water pumps.

ENVIRONMENT Through programs such as apprehension of smoke-belching vehicles, efficient garbage collection, the operation of Material Recovery Facilities, regular river cleanups, tree-planting and beautification works, the City Government makes sure the environment does not suffer the hazards of growth through the policy of sustainable development.

PEACE AND ORDER concerns making sure that the City is safe both for living and for business. This is done through maintaining traffic discipline at the busy Alabang central district and other major thoroughfares during peak hours, anti-drug and gambling drives via the Crusade Against Drug Abuse (CRUSADA) program, and raids against piracy and smut materials.

SOCIALIZED HOUSING seeks to provide shelter to informal settlers through the Land Banking Program for socialized housing. This is done through the acquisition of properties for socialized housing to benefit various associations, the facilitation of community organizing and capability building, and campaigns against establishment of illegal settlements.

LIVELIHOOD AND EMPLOYMENT Through micro financing projects and facilitates employment opportunities to job seekers through quarterly job fairs and job solicitations, the City Government aims to give Muntinlupeños the means to improve their lives.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE aims to deliver better services to the people through streamlined tax collection of business and real property; ISO 9000:2001 certification of service to cut on red tape, graft and corruption; and implementation of best practices including Real Property Tax Assessment, Local Governance on E-Commerce and in Eliminating Red Tape.

Schedule of Activities
10th City Charter Day

11th Muntinlupa-Gunma Friendship Day Celebration
7:00 AM, City Quadrangle, Putatan

Unveiling of "Memorial of Peace" Monument
9:00 AM, NBP Reservation, Poblacion

State of the City Address
10th City Charter Day Celebration
6:00 PM, City Quadrangle, Putatan

Ten years ago, no one would have thought Muntinlupa City would be this big.

From an isolated "jail town," Muntinlupa has grown into a first-class City steadily positioning itself as a prime business destination south of Metro Manila. Muntinlupa remains small only by name; with the current infrastructure and policies being put into place, Muntinlupa, accord[illegible] marketing guru Ned Roberto, is "unquestionably [illegible] City with the most potential for growth in Metro Manila."

At present, Muntinlupa is gearing itself to realize [illegible] potential by placing itself as the prime business destination in Southeast Asia by the year 2020. The City's face continues to change relentlessly as new infrastructure is put up. Policies that would help realize the vision are constantly being put into effect.

But most important of all, the City Government led by Mayor Jaime R. Fresnedi continues to build up Muntinlupeños as the foundation of a bigger, better City. Through education and history, people know more about their City and how they can contribute better to its growth. Through the provision of better services, residents gain a better appreciation for Muntinlupa so they know how to make it a better City.

More than being a big City, Muntinlupa is *home* to its residents. It is a City of people whose hearts beat as one, working together to make their home a better place. Who knows how big Muntinlupa can get in the next ten years?

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Syria president says US might attack

ROME—Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said in an interview published on Monday that he thought the United States might attack his country, but did not believe a strike was imminent.

Assad told Italy's la Repubblica newspaper that Syria wanted stability in the region, and insisted it had no hand in the killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri on Feb. 14 or in a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on Friday.

Relations between Washington and Damascus, poor for years, have deteriorated further since the killing of Hariri, and the United States has warned it may press for international sanctions against Syria.

"Washington has imposed sanctions on us and isolated us in the past, but each time the circle hasn't closed around us," Assad told la Repubblica.

"If, however, you ask me if I'm expecting an armed attack (from the United States), well I've seen it coming since the end of the war in Iraq. It's from then that tensions have been rising," he added.

Asked if a "settling of scores" was imminent, Assad said: "I don't think so, for now it's just skirmishing. True, the White House language, if looked at in detail, leads one to expect a campaign similar to the one that led up to attack on Iraq."

Rather than viewing Syria as an enemy, Assad said his country was a vital peace partner and force for stability.

"Sooner or later they will realize that we are the key to the solution. We are essential for the peace process, for Iraq.

Look, perhaps one day the Americans will come and knock on our door," he was quoted as saying.

The Lebanese opposition has blamed Syria for Hariri's killing and, backed by the United States and former colonial power France, has called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

BEIRUT demonstrator protesting against Syria, Feb. 28. AP

Assad rejected accusations of involvement in the killing.

"For us it would be like political suicide," he said.

He indicated Syria would take its time to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.

"From a technical viewpoint, the repatriation (of Syrian forces) could happen within the end of the year. But from a strategic viewpoint, it will only happen if we get serious guarantees. In a word, peace," Assad said.

Asked about Israeli accusations that Syria was involved in a suicide bombing at a night club in Tel Aviv on Friday that killed five people, Assad said: "It's a pointlessly offensive accusation. Syria has nothing to do with it."

The Syrian president said the United States had made crucial mistakes in its handling of Iraq following the fall of Baghdad and was trying to blame Damascus for its own failings.

He denied accusations that Syria was letting insurgents cross into neighboring Iraq unhindered and said he had offered to set up joint US-Syrian patrols of the border territory.

Washington had yet to reply, he was quoted as saying.

He added that the US reaction to the Sept. 2001 attacks on its cities had not resolved the root causes of the violence.

"Indeed, a few have been aggravated and first amongst these, the question of stability. From Damascus to Jerusalem up to Islamabad and Kabul, there is one long recruitment front for terror," he said.

Asked what his biggest fear was, Assad said: "The thought of this armed America of today which acts like a superpower with no vision." *AP*

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BTK serial killer suspect in US confesses to 6 slays

WICHITA, Kansas—The man arrested on suspicion of being the BTK serial killer confessed on the day of his arrest to six slayings, a source close to the investigation said.

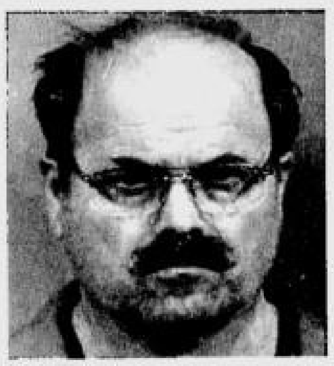
Investigators, who allege Dennis L. Rader committed a decades-old string of 10 slayings, also are looking into whether he was responsible for another three killings—including at least one that occurred after Kansas restored the death penalty in 1994, the source said on condition of anonymity on Sunday.

Rader made the confession Friday, the day of his arrest, according to the source. "The guy is telling us about the murders," the source said.

When asked for comment, District Attorney Nola Foulston said, "Your information is patently false," but she refused to say whether Rader had made any confessions or whether investigators are looking into Rader's possible involvement in more unsolved killings. Police spokesperson Janet Johnson also declined to comment specifically on the accuracy of the source's statements.

Rader was being held on a $10 million bond in the deaths of 10 people between 1974 and 1991. Police had long linked the BTK killer to eight murders, but added two more on Saturday after Rader's arrest and said at the time their investigation was continuing.

Now, the source said, police are looking whether Rader was responsible for the deaths of two Wichita State University students, as well as a woman who lived down the street from another known victim of BTK, the killer's self-coined nickname that stands for "Bind, Torture, Kill." It was unclear when the three slayings occurred, but the source said one of them took place while Kansas' death penalty was in effect.


RADER

Prosecutors had said initially they could not pursue the death penalty against Rader because the 10 murders linked to BTK occurred before Kansas state law allowed capital punishment.

Rader, 59, could appear in court as early as Monday, when he would stand in front of a judge on video while prosecutors recite yet-to-be-filed criminal charges against him. The judge would also review Rader's bond and set a permanent amount.

The hearing could happen Monday but was more likely to be postponed until Tuesday, the district attorney's office said Sunday. It was unclear whether Rader had a lawyer.

Police were confident Rader's arrest last week would bring to an end 30 years of fear about the BTK strangler. But as they pored over news of a suspect's capture, many residents here were left with an unsettling feeling—that he had been hidden among them all along.

Charlie Otero, whose parents and two siblings were BTK's first victims in 1974, said Sunday that he was "waiting with anticipation" to learn more about the DNA evidence that has been credited with helping crack the case.

Otero believes his family was targeted, although the rest of BTK's victims were likely chosen at random. He isn't sure why the family was targeted but said it's interesting that Rader and his father served in the Air Force at the same time in the 1960s. "I'm sure this will all come out during the trial," he said. *AP*

61 dead in Japan's deadliest winter

TOKYO — Heavy snow since December has killed 61 people across Japan, making it the deadliest winter in nearly two decades, with most of the victims elderly people who slipped shoveling snow off their roofs.

The deaths, reported in nine of Japan's 47 prefectures, are the highest since 82 people were killed in the winter to early 1986, Fire and Disaster Management Agency data showed as of the weekend.

The first fatality of the season was an 82-year-old who fell nearly three meters off his snowplow in December, followed by 30 deaths each in January and February.

Fifty of the 61 people killed were aged over 60, with most of them slipping from their roofs. Another 550 people were injured in 13 prefectures. *AFP*

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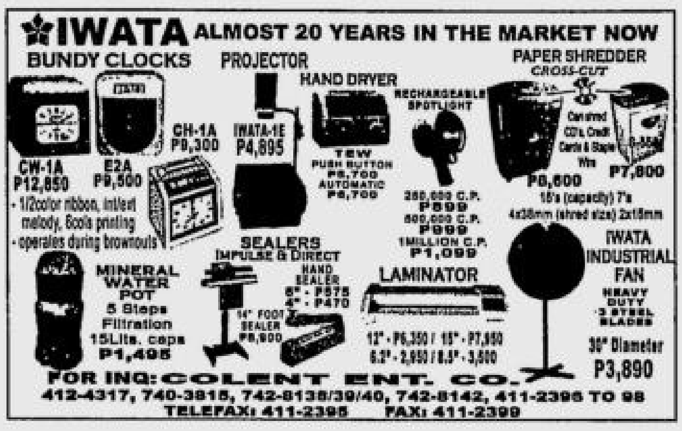
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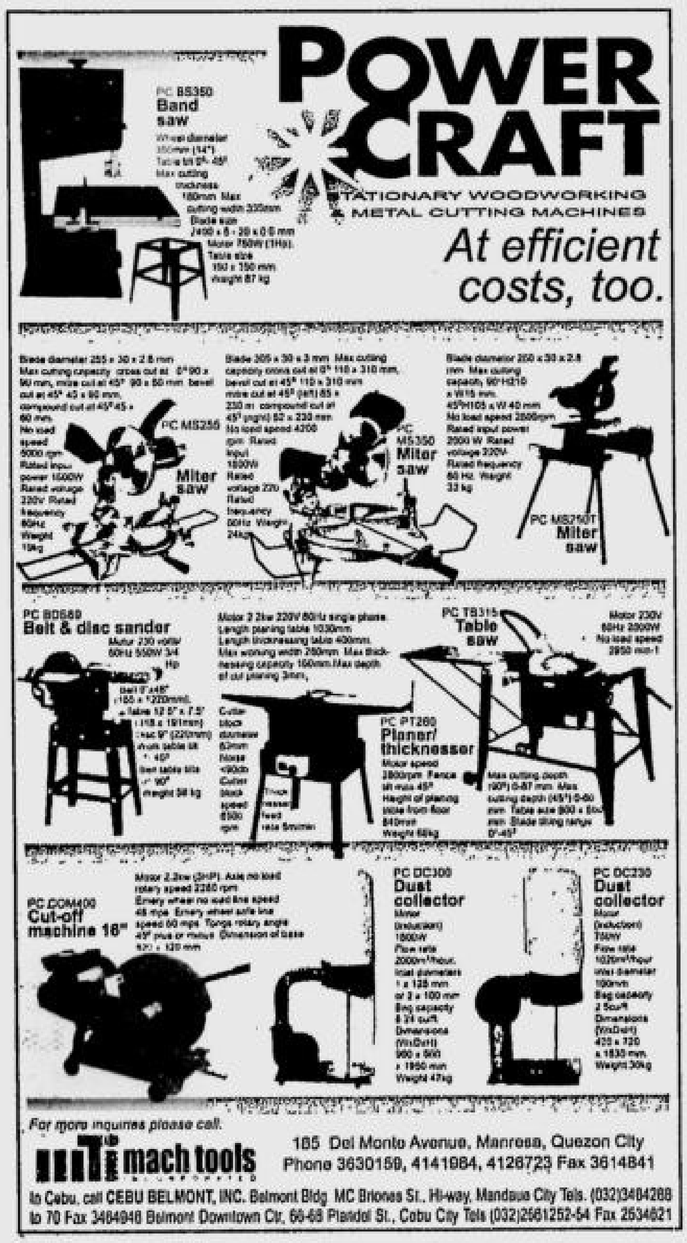
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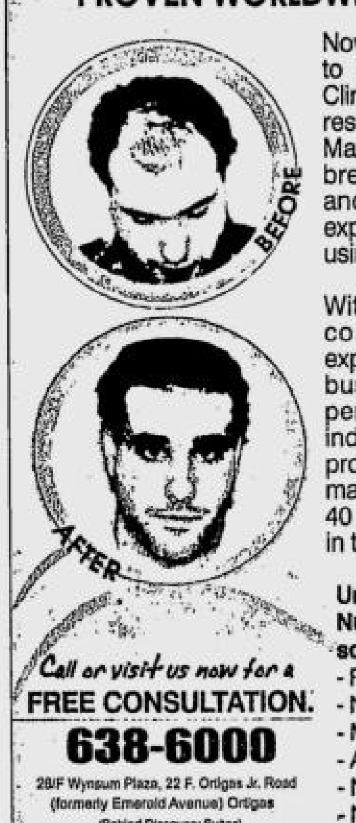
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B) Customers must write legibly his/her complete name, address with zip code, telephone, cell phone, email address and signature on the entry stubs of the raffle coupon and drop it in the designated drop boxes located at all Mercury Drug stores nationwide.

PROMO RULES:

1) Promo period start on March 1 and ends on July 31,2005.

2) Nationwide raffle draw will be held simultaneously in four (4) Regions (Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) on August 14, (Sunday) 2005 with the presence of DOH-BFAD representatives.

RAFFLE ENTRIES FROM:	PLACE OF DRAW
Metro Manila	Mercury Drug Q-Plaza Miranda Branch
Luzon	Mercury Drug Angeles AUF Mc Arthur Branch
Visayas	Mercury Drug Cebu Fuente Branch
Mindanao	Mercury Drug Davao Bajada Branch

PRIZES	NUMBER OF WINNERS
Mitsubishi Adventure GL	4 Winners (1 Metro Manila winner; 1 Luzon winner; 1 Visayas winner and 1 Mindanao winner).
Mercury Drug Gift Cert worth P 1,000 each	120 Winners (30 Metro Manila winners; 30 Luzon winners; 30 Visayas winners and 30 Mindanao winners).
P60,000 each	60 Charitable Institutions

3) Deadline for the submission of customer's raffle entries entries shall be on July 31, 2005 at the closing hour of each Mercury Drug store except for all 24 hours operations which is at 12:00 midnight. Late submission of raffle entries is automatically disqualified.

4) All prizes are tax paid and not convertible to cash.

5) Winners whose name are drawn more than once during the draw shall be awarded the prize with higher value.

6) Names of winners will be published in major newspapers of nationwide circulation. They will also be notified either by mail, telegrams, text message or telephone as to when and where they will claim their prizes.

7) Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days after the announcement of winners in the newspapers or after notification will be forfeited in favor of Mercury Drug Corporation upon approval from DOH-BFAD.

8) Employees of Mercury Drug Corporation and its subsidiaries, including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the raffle promo.

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DURATION PERIOD	DRAW DATE	REGIONAL DRAW	PLACE OF DRAW	PRIZES		EXTRA DRAW
				MAJOR	CONSOLATION	
MARCH 1 TO JULY 31 2005	AUG 14 2005 (SUNDAY)	Metro Mla.	Mercury Drug Q-Plaza Miranda Branch Manila	1 Winner MITSUBISHI Adventure GL	30 Winners Mercury Drug Gift Cert worth P1,000.00 each	60 Charitable intitution Winners of P60,000.00 each
-same-	-same-	Luzon	Mercury Drug Angeles AUF Branch McArthur Hway, Angeles City	1 Winner MITSUBISHI Adventure GL	30 Winners Mercury Drug Gift Cert worth P1,000.00 each	n/a
-same-	-same-	Visayas	Mercury Drug Cebu Fuente Branch Cebu, City	1 Winner MITSUBISHI Adventure GL	30 Winners Mercury Drug Gift Cert worth P1,000.00 each	n/a
-same-	-same-	Mindanao	Mercury Drug Davao-Bajada Branch Bajada,Davao City	1 Winner MITSUBISHI Adventure GL	30 Winners Mercury Drug Gift Cert worth P1,000.00 each	n/a
TOTAL NO. OF WINNERS				4 WINNERS	120 WINNERS	60 WINNERS

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Malaysia illegals seek UN help over crackdown

KUALA LUMPUR—Hundreds of Southeast Asian migrants gathered outside the UN office in Malaysia Monday hoping to win temporary refugee status ahead of a crackdown on illegal immigrants while thousands of others went into hiding, officials said.

Malaysia is set to launch a large-scale operation against hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants on Tuesday.

The operation to round up, whip and deport illegal immigrants, mainly Indonesians, marks the end of an amnesty which has twice been extended at Jakarta's request.

Some 300 people from Burma (also known as Myanmar), Cambodia and Indonesia's Aceh province lined up Monday at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) hoping to secure UN support to remain in Malaysia.

Zaw Aung from Burma said he had been in Malaysia for 10 years illegally along with his wife and two children.

"With this crackdown, my friend who has been giving me shelter has told me to leave his house because he fears he may also be arrested. I have no home now. Please help me," he said.

Another Burma migrant, Morani, 32, had camped outside the UN agency for the past week with her 4-year-old daughter to obtain a letter to prevent arrest or deportation.

"I am afraid of being arrested. We do not have any travel documents. We do not want to go back," she said.

Morani, whose husband works in the plantation sector in northeastern Kelantan state, said they had been in Malaysia for the past 12 years.

Malaysia is deploying tens of thousands of volunteers and officials to hunt down the illegal immigrants.

"We know many of the illegals have gone into hiding," Mahadi Arshad, director general of the 300,000-strong civilian security force volunteers, said.

Mahadi said they would launch their blitz from late Monday. "We know where they are hiding."

Some 35,000 volunteers who have received special training would be involved in the operation along with hundreds of immigration and police officials, he said.

The crackdown would be Malaysia's largest blitz to flush out illegal immigrants in three years. A similar nationwide sweep was carried out in 2002 following the end of a four-month amnesty program.

The operation has been criticized by human rights groups which say it is open to abuse.

Amnesty International earlier this month urged Malaysia to halt the planned deportation of illegals amid fears some could face execution or torture in their home countries.

Migrants from Burma, Nepal and Aceh could be subjected to serious human rights violations if they were sent home in the crackdown, it said.

Before the recent amnesty began on Oct. 29 last year, Malaysia estimated there were more than a million illegal workers in the country, mostly from Indonesia but also from the Philippines, Burma, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.

Nearly 400,000, mostly Indonesians, left without facing any penalty during the first three months of the amnesty, but others have remained, clinging to jobs in the construction, plantation and service industries in the face of unemployment at home. *AFP*

New bird flu cases alarm Vietnam

HANOI—A 14-year-old girl in Vietnam has contracted the deadly bird flu—the third human case in the past week from northern Thai Binh province—health officials confirmed Monday.

The girl tested positive for the H5N1 virus, said Nguyen Duc Hien, director of the tropical disease unit at Hanoi's Bach Mai.

Her 21-year-old brother was confirmed last Friday to have the disease and is currently in critical condition in the same hospital.

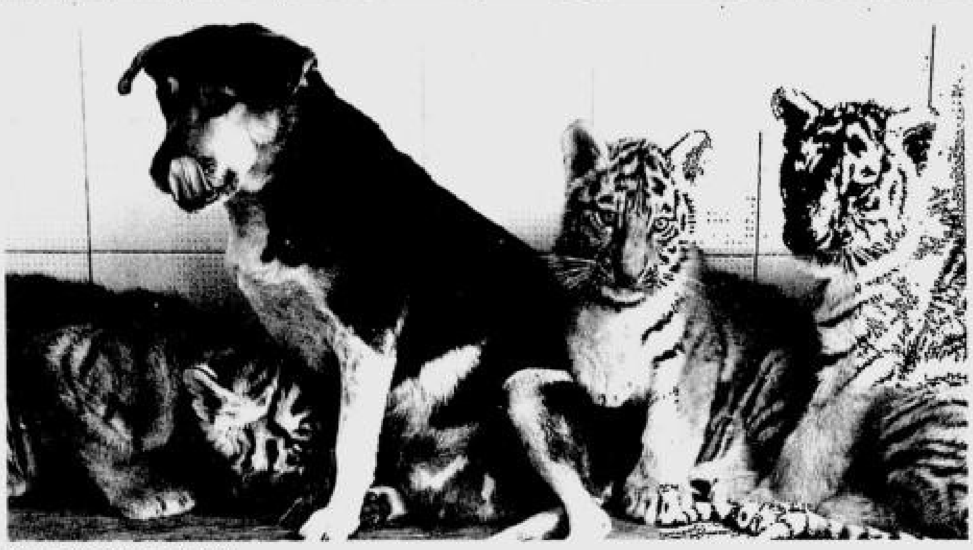
Provincial officials have said the two had eaten chicken at a friend's house during Lunar New Year festivities earlier this month. The family did not raise poultry, but there were bird flu outbreaks in their neighborhood.

On Sunday, officials said a 69-year-old man from the same province had died from bird flu on Wednesday, the 14th fatality from the disease over the past nine weeks in the country's most recent outbreak.

The man had eaten chicken with his family during the Lunar New Year, health officials said. None of his family have reported symptoms, but officials expressed concerns about controlling the disease in Thai Binh province.

Health officials have raised alarms about the northern province, where another suspected case—that of a 36 year-old man—is currently being tested.

"We are very worried about the bird flu," said Pham Van Diu, director of the Thai Binh's Preventive Medicine Center. "Thai Binh is an agriculture province with many farmer families involved in backyard poultry farming. It's therefore very difficult to deal with. The war on bird flu is very complicated." *AP*



SURROGATE MOM

Seven-year-old female dog Balu sits with a trio of 3-month-old tiger cubs at the Wild Life Zoo in Shanghai, China, Feb. 28. Balu has been acting as the surrogate mother, nursing the Siberian tiger cubs after their mother refused to nurse them. She has nursed 12 other tiger cubs in the past five years. AP

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China to boost military spending

BEIJING—China is likely to announce yet another year of double-digit growth in its defense budget in the next week, feeding a modernization drive that is sparking concern in rival Taiwan of invasion and US worries about stability.

The budget to be revealed by Finance Minister Jin Renqing during the annual parliament session that opens on Saturday will appear relatively modest—about half that of regional power Japan.

But analysts say the official numbers are an incomplete indicator of the actual scale of resources China is pouring into defense. Many estimate real expenditure is likely to be two to four times what the government says.

Even so, the official growth figure is a stark reminder of the ambitious buildup by the 2.3-million-strong People's Liberation Army, the world's largest standing army but one that would have to pay dearly to retake a well-armed Taiwan.

"I think the official budget will cover around a 10 to 12 percent increase compared with last year," said Andrew Yang, a defense analyst at a private think-tank in Taipei.

China has boosted defense spending steadily in the past d15 years to transform the military into a high-tech force with the muscle to back its threat to attack Taiwan if the island declares independence.

Among the clearest signs of that plan are purchases from Russia of advanced fighter jets, submarines and destroyers. It has also produced as many as 700 short-range missiles that analysts say are aimed at Taiwan, which China has considered a breakaway province since their civil war split in 1949.

Now, China plans to step up modernization, a defense white paper said in December.

"If they want to achieve that objective, they have got to spend more money," Yang said.

Officially, defense spending grew about 11 percent last year from 2003, hitting 211.7 billion yuan ($25.6 billion), according to the white paper. By comparison, the US defense budget is about $400 billion this year and Japan's is about $47 billion. *Reuters*

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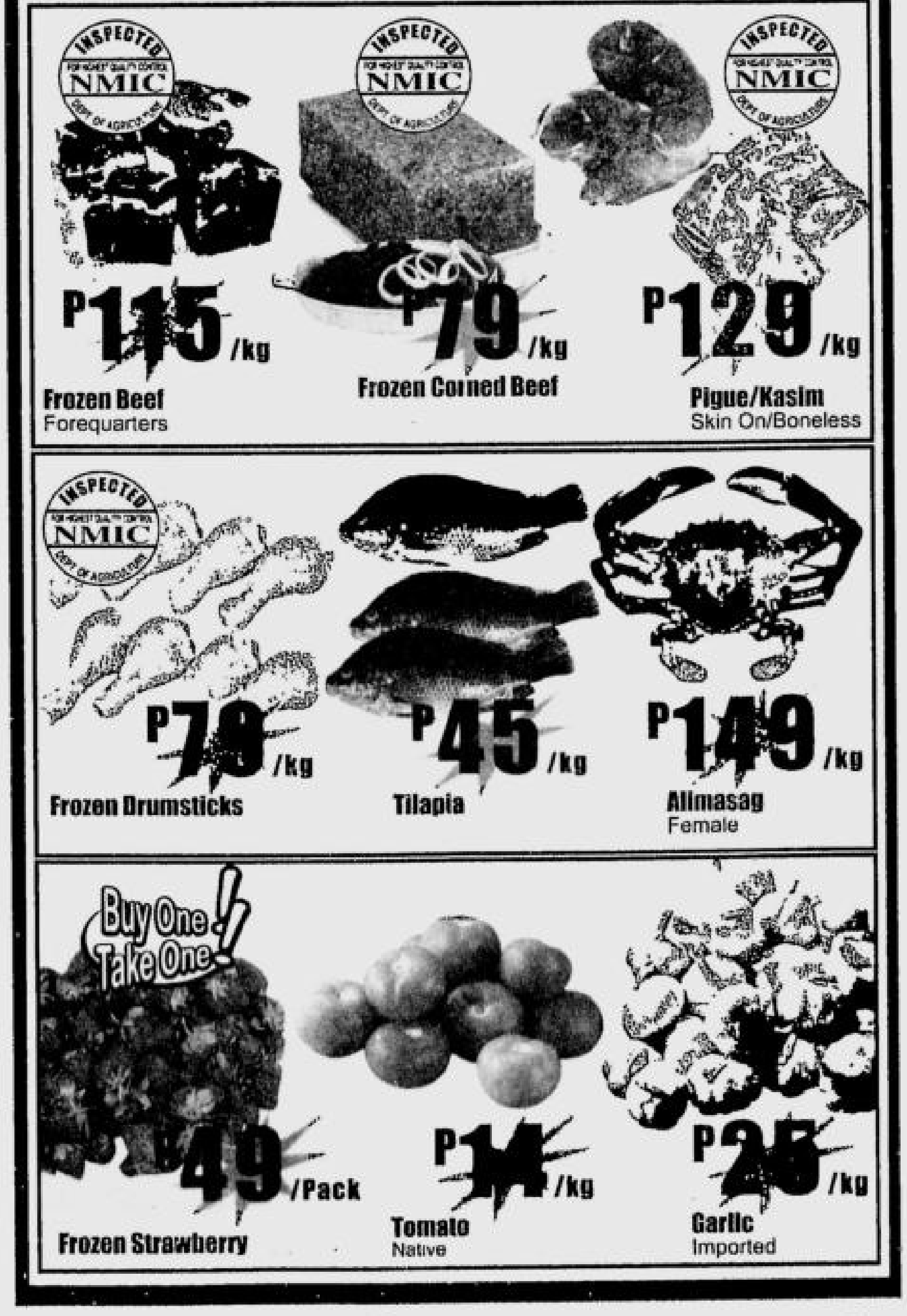

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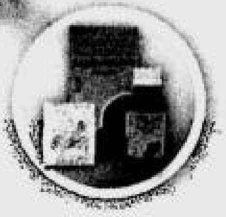

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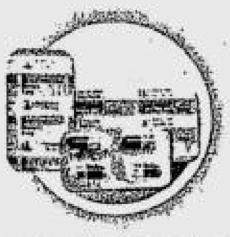

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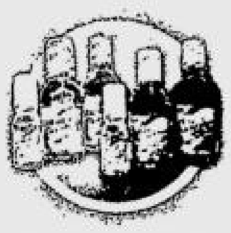

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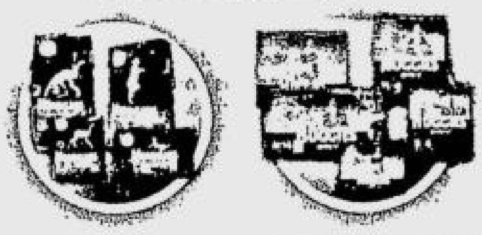

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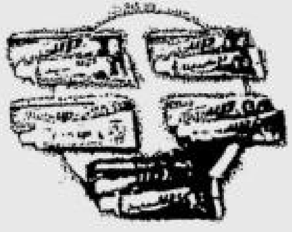

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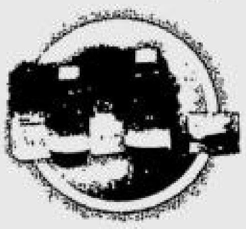

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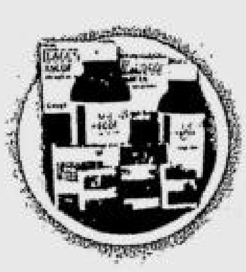

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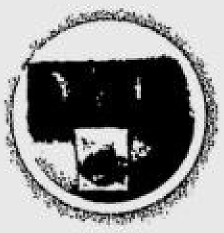

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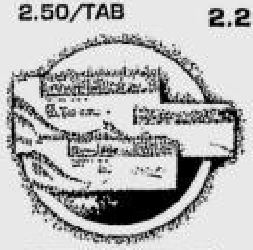

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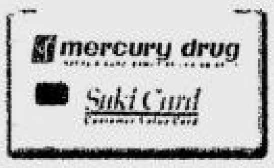

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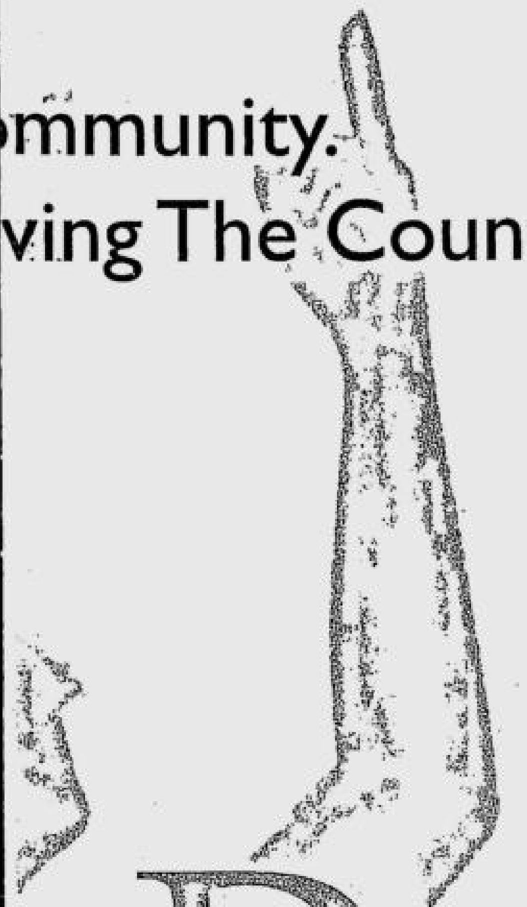

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Your corporate mission of providing safe, reliable medicines at competitive prices provides the key to your company's undeniable success. I invite the management, employees and loyal customers of Mercury Drug to support our ten-point legacy agenda to beat the odds, which includes clearly defined strategies to enhance public health.

On behalf of the Filipino people, I wish to commend Mercury Drug for this corporate milestone and its consistent role in community development.

Mabuhay!

Gloria Arroyo
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Congratulations and Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Manuel M. Dayrit, M.D., MSc.
Secretary of Health

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Words are simply not enough to express the gratitude and appreciation that I, together with my entire family, have for all the Mercurians past & present, who toiled with us through the years, especially in the most challenging circumstances.

While you may view Mercury Drug now as the result of our great efforts in the past, it may be best to look at it as our starting point for greater service in the future.

We continue to help keep the nation healthy.

Congratulations, mabuhay tayong lahat on our 60th Anniversary!

Mariano Que
Founder

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OPINION

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Idiot box

EDITORIAL

SOCIAL Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman last week warned parents against the evils of excessive TV viewing by children. Giving an update on her department's Early Childhood Development Project, Soliman said that marathon TV viewing could stunt a child's creativity and skills.

Various studies here and abroad have shown that too much TV can make one dumb. This is especially true in the Philippines where TV is one vast intellectual and cultural wasteland featuring silly noontime and evening shows, inane telenovelas and show-biz programs that offer mostly irrelevant gossip and mudslinging.

Excessive TV viewing can stunt children's intellectual development at a time in their lives when they most need mental stimulation. Studies in the United States have shown that in children's early years, when the brain is malleable and sensitive, marathon TV viewing prolongs the dominance of right brain functions that induce a trance-like state. Television viewing for more than 20 hours a week could seriously inhibit the development of verbal-logical, left brain functions, the studies said.

Excessive TV viewing has led to a decline in reading skills, studies have shown. Television viewing is an easier and more preferable activity compared to the challenge of book reading, particularly for children who have not yet fully developed their reading skills. Television viewing requires little concentration, defocuses the mind and encourages passivity. In contrast, reading requires concentration, thought, focusing and the ability to visualize.

Soliman said that overexposure to TV deadens children's creativity. Her statement is supported by studies which have shown that children's ability to form imaginative pictures is severely impaired when they are bombarded with TV images. The process of generating mental pictures is necessary if children are to develop dendrites and neural connectors that lay the foundation for intelligence and creativity.

Excessive TV viewing can seriously affect children's sensory development. By its very nature, TV is an impoverished sensory environment. American researchers recently found that 96 hours of laboratory-induced sensory deprivation produced the same effects on a person as only a few minutes of TV viewing. No wonder, as Soliman said, young TV addicts tend to be "catatonic, their eyes look past you when you talk to them."

The two-dimensional TV screen does not help develop a sense of depth and perspective. At a time when children's sense of sight is maturing, excessive TV viewing, a very passive visual activity, can seriously impair their observational skills. And because TV viewing is more visual than auditory, children's sense of hearing is not fully exercised and developed.

But more alarming than these, TV offers very strong competition to real-life experiences and activities, thus dulling the child's sense of wonder. The child does not get a true picture of the actual world. In addition, the child-TV addict fails to develop a sense of self for lack of contact with others. Television can never be a substitute for meeting, talking with and interacting with real people in real situations.

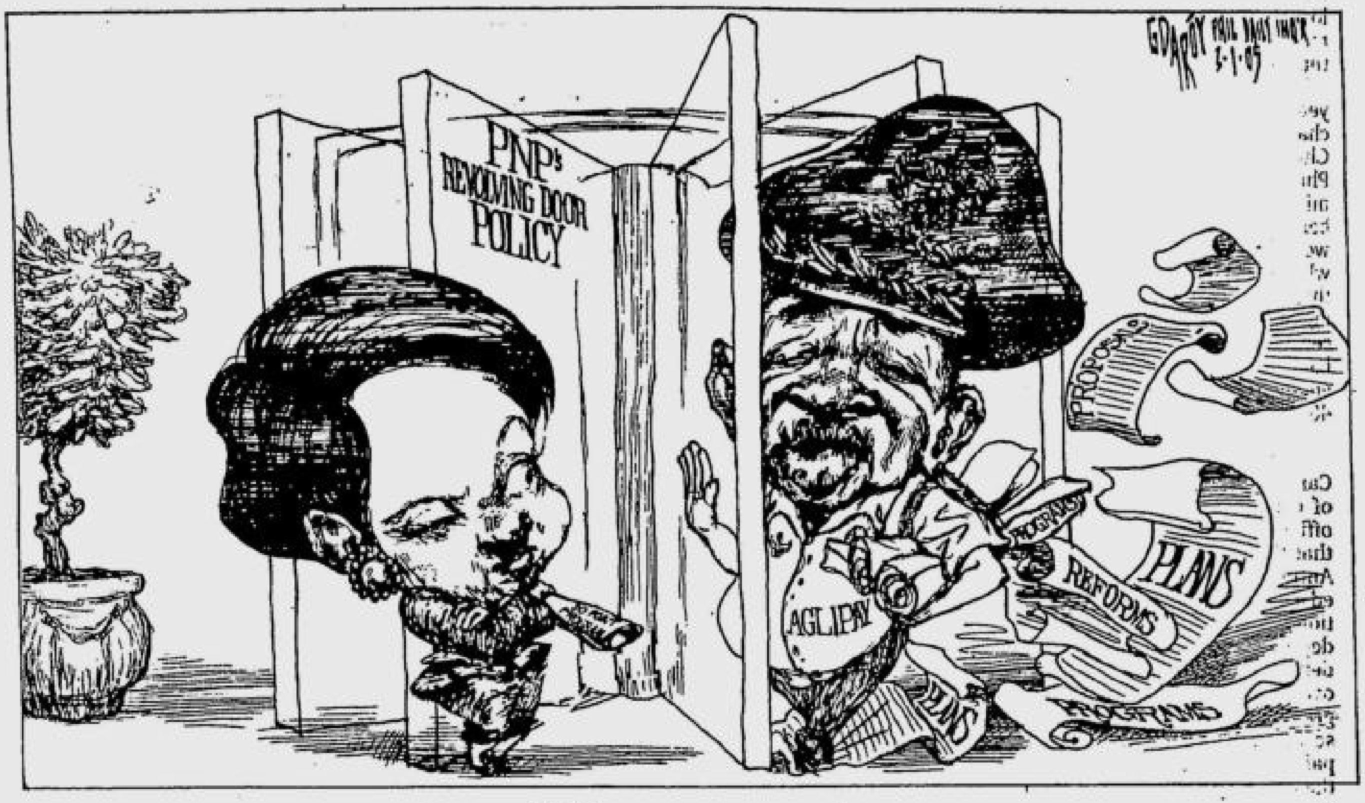
On the practical side, excessive TV viewing prevents children from completing their homework and reduces the amount of sleep that they get, and could ultimately affect their alertness and grades in school.

What to do, then? Parents have to set limits. A safe range would be one hour to two hours a day. Parents also have to discuss with their children what programs to view, using a TV guide or a newspaper listing instead of just flipping channels. They could also promote intelligent viewing by discussing the programs they have watched afterward. Some scenes, like those depicting violence or those with sexual content, may have to be explained to the children.

Parents could encourage children to watch programs about real people or fictional characters who could be their role models. They could also help their children critically evaluate TV commercials. If parents find some programs or parts of programs offensive, they should make their views known to the offending TV station.

American literary critic Harold Bloom said that TV works against the reading experience which is highly solitary, cognitive, difficult and challenging to the average child. But, he said, students have to read or they will die—"they will experience a kind of death in life."

The reading level of school children is bad enough. We cannot allow the "boob tube" to complete the "idiotization" of today's children. Something has to be done to stop excessive TV viewing and arrest the decline in reading skills.



Cuadillos as authors

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DID you see who just reemerged, without advance notice, from the woodwork? Gregorio B. Honasan of the controversial Philippine Military Academy Class 1971, that's who.

This is "Mistah Gringo" (a nickname lifted from the 1966 Clint Eastwood's western movie "A Fistful of Dollars"). PMA baron and class president. Ex-colonel. Former senator. Mentor of the Magdalo mutineers. Guru of seven coups.

All the coups that Honasan planned and staged failed, notes "Closer Than Brothers," Yale University's comparative study of PMA Classes 1941 and 1971. "That is a record of sorts."

Class '71 graduates include Panfilo Lacson, Honasan, Vic Batac, Red Kapanunan, among other officers. "Only 18 months after graduation, Class '71 became the defenders of the dictatorship," wrote Alfred McCoy in that study. "They were the ultimate creatures of martial law."

Among the 85 graduates, five practiced torture. Six were murdered. They provided 15 of the 77 officers involved in two or more coups. Among these were then Lt. Cols. Tiburcio Fusillero, Rafael Galvez, Franklin Brawner. (Add former AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, now facing court martial for graft.) The number of would-be caudillos "was by far the highest for any single class."

But Gringo faded from the radar-screen after he capped a lackluster Senate term by joining the "Craven 11." He voted to seal the second envelope during Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial.

Yet, Honasan was only being consistent. As class spokesman, he pledged earlier that no matter how the impeachment turned out, "Erap would be adopted as a class 'mistah.'" And he turned fugitive, yet again, when his fingerprints surfaced in the failed Oakwood mutiny.

Now, Honasan told INQUIRER's Michael Lim Ubac, he's a budding author. Together with aging Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa comrades, he's writing a book. Is this, as Maurice Oldfield once said, "a book by a committee, for a committee, about a committee"?

But Filipinos never read a definitive account of what led to and followed Edsa I, Honasan asserts. Historical distortions and biases stud everything that came before this still-to-be-written book. "RAM's contributions to peaceful revolution were marginalized, even distorted."

"History books [used] in public schools brand us as criminals," he complained. "My children ask if I'm a criminal and I reply: 'Do I look like a criminal?'"

So, will this be RAM's "Apologia Pro Vita Sua"? Oxford scholar John Henry Newman's towering integrity insulated the Apologia from being self-serving. Otherwise, self-justification guarantees a bookshop flop.

Mortals like us, meanwhile, make do with findings by scholars. There's the Ateneo-Madison Universities conference on the Marcos regime. Yale University did a perceptive analysis of RAM in its study of PMA graduates. From 12 books and 16 periodicals, professional editors stitched together a riveting account in "Chronology of a Revolution."

Then, there's the Fact-Finding Commission report, written by now Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. Maybe Honasan can explain away items like this on page 182 of the commission report:

"Unable to get to Malacañang, rebel troops under Honasan headed for Camp Aguinaldo through the Santa Mesa route. But in their withdrawal, they fired on civilian onlookers who were jeering at them, killing 11 and wounding 54. Earlier, they fired at the convoy of President Aquino's son, Noynoy. Noynoy was wounded while his bodyguard was killed."

What about this detail on Page 234? "In January 1989, Enrique 'Henry' Cojuangco, younger brother of Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco, arranged for Gen. Alejandro Galido to meet with then fugitive Honasan in a darkened van at Makati…While they cruised along South Superhighway, Honasan asked Galido's support for a planned destabilization for March 1989…Galido kept ex-President Marcos informed about the progress of the attempt."

RAM originally was a group of 11 idealistic PMA officers organized to fight corruption. Inspired by the charismatic Victor Corpus, they launched their "We Belong" March on PMA Alumni Day, led by Cadet Honasan.

RAM grew to 861 academy alumni, although leadership came from 15 officers of Class '71. "In later coup planning, Honasan stripped it of his mentor's ideological content and applied their tactical contents to simple seizure of power," the Yale study notes.

When Edsa rolled around, RAM had become an armed unit backing a Juan Ponce Enrile determined to succeed Marcos. People power saved them from Marcos tanks.

"Against the tide of history, RAM leaders persisted in their reach for power, even after President Aquino had won her electoral mandate," notes "Closer Than Brothers." Dreams of becoming caudillos die hard?

Over the years, RAM has been fractured and frustrated, Fault lines run along factions based on loyalties to military and civilian patrons, military academy class ties, linguistic differences, and generational differences.

"During the time of darkness, we, together with a few, held hands and jumped into the void risking everything, praying for light and change," Gringo claims. "This act of RAM sparked the 1986 revolt."

This is insipid PR pap. Will this still-to-be-completed book read that way? Then, Dorothy Parker's classic review will come to pass. "This is a (book) that's not to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown—with force."

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Changes of the heart

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

(Conclusion)

THE PHILIPPINE Revolutions of 1896 and 1899 were a classic case of the elite usurping a popular uprising and bending it to its agenda. From hindsight, Andres Bonifacio was doomed once he aligned with Emilio Aguinaldo and the principales—the provincial leaders—of Cavite. The *principales* wanted change, but only of the leadership from Spanish to Filipino rulers. They did not want the kind of change Bonifacio envisioned, which, to paraphrase Narciso Reyes' vision of Edsa, not only entailed a change of leaders but a change of the social order itself. They did what they had to do: They murdered Bonifacio.

From hindsight as well, Aguinaldo's revolt against the Americans was doomed once the *ilustrados*—the *mestizos* and local aristocrats—took it over. They too wanted change but only of the kind that put them in charge, not one that revamped the feudal order the Spanish had built. When being in charge became possible with American rule, though in a circumscribed way, they gave in almost as soon as the first shot was fired.

The end of the Japanese Occupation and Edsa I, on the other hand, are classic examples of the elite being in disarray but coming together when threatened from below. The Japanese Occupation saw the elite divided between those who collaborated with the Japanese and those who waited for MacArthur to return. After the war, the collaborators were haled to court, a bitter nation loudly calling for their heads.

The collaboration trials did not last very long, and no one of consequence was ever convicted. The Americans themselves cut the trials short, fearing their effects on their influence in postwar Philippines, particularly with the Huks knocking on the doors of power. A few years later, the collaborators had rehabilitated themselves, enough for several high-profile ones, chief of them Jose P. Laurel, head of the Japanese-sponsored Philippine government, to almost win against the incumbent, Elpidio Quirino, in the presidential election of 1949.

The same was true after Edsa. Like the Japanese Occupation, martial had riven the elite into Marcos collaborators, also called cronies, and those opposed to him. After Edsa, many cronies fled abroad while those left behind endured at least public revulsion, if not arraignment and jail. But like the end of the Japanese Occupation, the Marcos collaborators were rehabilitated faster than the speed of light, or the renewed disappearance of public monies. A little over a year later, in May 1987, many of them were running for public office. Six years later, in 1992, Danding Cojuangco who had fled abroad tail between heels after Edsa put the fear of God and Marcos on the Edsa forces by threatening to win the presidential elections.

As in the past, the incentive for the elite discovering reconciliation was the New People's Army, which was unwilling to reconcile with the now even bigger divide between rich and poor. As in the past, government did not hound the collaborators, it "unsheathed the sword of war" against the subversives. And they were subversives in seeking, to quote Reyes again, not just a change of rulers but a change of heart among the rulers.

That is the reason I've been much fascinated by "Edsa III" and have always thought it would make for a fantastic topic for a doctoral thesis. In fact, I've been more fascinated by it than the two Edsas because it is a complex phenomenon that says worlds about our society and culture. I've always put "Edsa III" in quotation marks because while it clearly is not an Edsa in the way that I and II were, it is an Edsa in an even truer sense in that it hints at the wellsprings of true revolution.

Edsas I and II had a deep moral anchor in their common repudiation of corruption, a corruption that went beyond venality to sheer rottenness, a corruption of the soul, if you will, and not just of the body. "Edsa III" had no such anchor in its defense of the very symbol of that kind of corruption, who was Erap. If we recall, what sparked that mammoth gathering by the Great Unshod at the Edsa Shrine, which had Bishop Socrates Villegas crying foul (smell), was Erap being dragged away from his home in San Juan and fingerprinted like a common thief (he wasn't, he was an uncommon one) in a police precinct. The ensuing protest, which took the form of a Woodstock at the Shrine, seemed like a perversion of everything Edsa stood for.

But underneath that seeming execration of moral scruple lay something deeper, which was the thing that had driven the Lapiang Malaya and other cults in the past to launch their seemingly batty riots. Indeed that had brought the masses to join the real revolutions of the past. Which was what Ninoy Aquino and others had been saying before martial law: the "spectacular divide" between rich and poor, which was violently shaking the "social volcano." Erap just happened to be a convenient excuse. The real reason lay in the unstable, or volatile, or combustible, elements inside society. It was—as those who were roiling "Edsa III" for their own ends but who saw to their horror that it would sweep them along with everyone else in its path—the social volcano exploding.

That too was contained, of course. What we see all around us today are the rubble and debris of failed revolutions, mammoth and heroic upheavals dissipated in the end by those they would ultimately bring down. I do believe that a change in attitude is a monumental change. But not all of the optimism and euphoria and newfound confidence in the world will mean anything unless we turn this country inside out, make the poor less poorer, and make education—Eggy's and my best bet to lead people out of the wilderness—available to them.

Narciso Reyes is right: The real revolution is yet to be.

Convincing the skeptics

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE PRESIDENT has made a cornerstone of her administration its fight against corruption, highlighting it during her speech at the recent Edsa anniversary. And well it should be, for studies have calculated that as much as P200 billion is lost to it yearly. But GMA's campaign has to be more convincing, judging from the skepticism that attends it.

A survey was conducted from Dec. 8 to 15 last year among executives of the various foreign chambers of commerce here, the Makati Business Club and the Management Association of the Philippines, to assess the first six months of this administration. The survey polled over 3,000 members of this associations, 83.8 percent of whom were from top management and 69 percent of whom are Filipino. 58.8 percent of them felt that the administration was "not doing enough/nothing at all" to combat corruption, while 33.3 percent said it was "barely enough." On the other hand, 48.5 percent felt it was "not doing enough/nothing at all" to curb smuggling, while 40.9 percent said it was doing "barely enough."

* * *

At the time of the survey, the trial of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and the investigation of charges of corruption against two lower-ranking AFP officials had just started. The survey also noted that the government, through the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, late last year conducted a workshop on developing a counter-corruption strategy, facilitated by Tony Kwok, former deputy commissioner of Hong Kong's Independent Commission against Corruption. Moreover, the Office of the Ombudsman has been granted by Congress a heftier budget for 2005 so that it can pursue its anti-corruption campaign more vigorously. Then too, included in the recent revamp are two agencies considered among the most corruption-prone: the Bureau of Customs and the Department of Public Works, now headed by Alberto Lina and Hermogenes Ebdane, respectively. Congress also passed recently the Lateral Attrition Law that establishes system of rewards and punishment in the BIR and Customs.

Thus, presumably, if the survey were conducted now, all these efforts would be factored in as proof of government's determination to deal with corruption and smuggling. It should be noted that foreign corporations doing business here are particularly sensitive to the rampant smuggling going on in competitive commodities, including agricultural items. Thus, a lot will depend on how the new customs chief will perform. This Thursday, I'll write about a recent chat I had with him.

* * *

Last month saw the 60th anniversary of the Liberation of Manila as well as other memorable events of World War II, such as the liberation by Filipino forces of the prison camp in Los Baños, where many Americans were incarcerated, including Fr. James Reuter, S.J. and the daring rescue of over 500 American prisoners in Cabanatuan by the US 34th Rangers, with the help of Filipino guerillas from Nueva Ecija.

Over the past two Sundays, Cecile Alvarez and I tried to do our bit in our dzRH program by focusing on the valor, heroism and love of country of that generation of Filipinos who defended it from external aggression. From the "Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor" we invited lawyer Rafael Estrada, 84, a colonel in the USAFFE forces, who fought in Bataan and survived the Death March and five-months' imprisonment in Capas, and Emilio Aquino, 84, a first lieutenant in the Philippine Scouts, who fought in Corregidor and was also imprisoned in Capas. We also invited Eugenio Jongo, 82, a former guerilla whose unit was involved in that daring Cabanatuan rescue.

* * *

What struck us was how the Filipino veterans' recollections remain so clear, providing us gripping stories after over 60 years. Cecile plans to make them into radio plays in her award-winning "Radyo Balintataw" for "Araw ng Kagitingan."

Aquino recalled how their hope in the promised arrival of the American rescue column in the island fortress was so strong in the beginning. As the weeks and months passed, this hope dimmed, but they kept up the fight under the merciless enemy bombardment of Corregidor and the ravages of sickness and death. He narrated how a Japanese bomb hit the mouth of a tunnel there, killing 72 of his comrades. He recounted that his brother and a friend managed to see him alive in Manila, where the troops were taken after the fall of Corregidor before being shipped in train wagons to Capas. Aquino said the brief encounters were very important, as the news was relayed to his family that he was alive. At that point, the old veteran began to shed tears.

* * *

Sgt. "Amang" Jongo narrated how he was lured into the guerilla movement in Nueva Ecija while in the business of supplying the US forces with things they needed. In time, he became the custodian of guerilla firearms, which was very risky. He said one of the key contributions of the Nueva Ecija guerillas was to supply vital intelligence information to the US forces about the Japanese forces.

A new Hollywood film called "The Great Raid," whose advance screening recently was sponsored by US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the daring rescue by American rangers of over 500 American POWs in a Cabanatuan prison camp, clearly showed the role of the guerillas. Jongo stressed that without the guerillas' intelligence network and their blocking positions on the eastern and western side of the POW camp, that rescue might not have been successful.

Jongo also narrated how the communities near Cabanatuan helped transport the sick and weakened US prisoners to Pampanga aboard 50 carabao sleds, at great risk to their lives.

One of the two Filipino guerilla captains who took part in that daring raid was Capt. Eduardo Joson, the father of incumbent Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson.

A visit to Jolo

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE was a special moment as I was watching "The Aviator" when I felt a personal connection not just to the film but also to Howard Hughes, the eccentric tycoon, filmmaker and aviation pioneer whose life is told in the movie.

A major part of the movie dwells on Hughes' efforts to create new and innovative aircraft, efforts that weren't always appreciated. Perhaps the most denigrated of these aircraft was the "Hercules," at that time the world's largest plane, which Hughes conceived during World War II as an alternative to ships and aircraft carriers that were increasingly vulnerable to attacks from enemy submarines. Wracked by design snags and financial problems, the "Hercules" even earned the nickname "The Spruce Goose," allegedly because of its awkward looks.

A climactic moment in the film is when the humongous plane, with Hughes at the wheel, successfully takes to the air, validating the millionaire playboy's vision. But even this was, in the end, not enough to save him from his demons.

And what was my personal connection with the movie? Well, just the day before, I had taken a ride for the first time on what's known hereabouts as the C-130, the present-day descendant of the original "Hercules." In fact, the plane still goes by that name in the US, I'm told.

* * *

I'D HEARD from colleagues about what it feels like riding a C-130, but despite the rather primitive arrangements of canvas seats and webbing backrests, I found the two-and-a-half-hour flight to Jolo surprisingly comfortable. What I wasn't ready for was the turbulence when boarding from the plane's rear, with blasts of hot air threatening to sweep one off the runway.

I was in the C-130 upon the invitation of Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman who had just found out that the C-130 was available for her use to bring relief goods for the evacuees and decided to also schedule a meeting with local government officials led by Sulu Gov. Ben Loong. With us on the flight was Sen. Dick Gordon, who was also "wearing" his other hat as chair of the Philippine National Red Cross; Secretary Mely Nicolas, lead convenor of the National Anti-Poverty Commission; and Bai Nor Karon, DSWD secretary in the ARMM.

As Dinky tells it, government officials jump at the chance to use the C-130 whenever it is available because it's the only such serviceable aircraft here. "It's a real workhorse," she said, deployed for all sorts of missions, from transporting troops and vehicles to ferrying relief goods that would otherwise take days to arrive. With some envy, Dinky and Dick talked of how US President George W. Bush employs a "Hercules" for the sole purpose of transporting his official limo on overseas trips.

On this trip to Jolo, though, the huge plane transported not just the officials, their staff and members of the media, but also "family packs" filled with rice, clothes, canned goods and dried fish for 1,000 families and 38 boxes of donated medicine from Indonesia.

Who would have thought the "workhorse" serving the needs of people in desperate need in all corners of our archipelago was born in the audacious imagination of Howard Hughes?

* * *

TO OUR relief, we were told that fighting between government forces and fighters belonging to an alleged "breakaway" group of the MNLF had quieted just the day before.

At the meeting, attended by the national officials and local executives, including a number of mayors, as well as civil society representatives, the concern was primarily aimed at "immediate and long-term rehabilitation needs" in the affected communities.

"We need to pursue our development plans which were interrupted by the fighting," Loong said. "We're envious of Basilan, which already has a good road network," the governor added, referring to the island which until recently was the stronghold of the notorious Abu Sayyaf.

Immediate needs were identified: rebuilding the houses that were destroyed by mortar, meeting the acute housing shortage in Sulu and strengthening the health service networks, particularly blood banks and emergency services.

The presence of national officials, which is expressive of the national government's concern for Sulu, is equally important, said Mrs. Abdullah, who described herself as a retired government employee. "We hope to see you more often here, not just during disasters or conflicts," she declared.

* * *

AFTER THE MEETING and a hurried lunch, our party proceeded to Indanan, where evacuees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) had found emergency shelter in an elementary school.

Signs proudly declared that the school had been named a "model school," and indeed, despite the crowded school buildings and tents standing on the quadrangle, the school still bore traces of the lovely garden and neat facilities. But it may not be for long, as the hundreds of evacuee families rely on just two bathrooms for their needs, and must travel to the next barangay to buy potable water at P20 a pail. Illness has ravaged the families, especially the children. Meanwhile, classes are at a standstill, disrupting the education of the students in this "model" school.

While Red Cross volunteers distributed plastic pails filled with rice and canned goods, the IDPs queued quietly before the truck, as a light rain soaked everyone. The goods transported in the C-130, in the meantime, will be distributed to "balik-barangay" families, starting with the 187 families who have returned to Panamao, where the fighting started.

I was glad I took up Dinky's invitation to join the party to Jolo, despite the early boarding time of 5:30 a.m., not just for the chance to ride a plane designed by Howard Hughes, but also for the opportunity to put a human face to the Sulu conflict, to feel the story behind the headlines.

Of the Island of Mindanao (3)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THERE are certain observations made by Thomas Forrest after his visit in 1775 to Mindanao that makes one conclude that human nature doesn't really change. After a visit to the sultan, the interpreter asked Forrest if he wished to visit Chartow, the sultan's natural son, but the captain declined knowing Rajah Mura was jealous of Chartow and Topang. The politic reality was that Rajah Mura was more powerful than Pahadrine since he held the "crown lands" which his father Molano had given him when he gave up the sultanate in favor of his brother.

Forrest felt "a stranger" to their customs and was nervous about saying the wrong thing since politics would have come up sooner or later. He was afraid of saying something that would offend someone. He described them as "being idle, they were fond of politics, news, and every kind of small talk." In general they spoke Malay.

'Since he was marooned by the monsoon, Forrest faced the prospects of staying there many months until he could return to Borneo, where the English had gone after leaving Balambangan. He needed to be circumspect particularly because of the "jealousies and heartburnings among them."

Rajah Mura was his host at the fort, where in his court every person entitled to sit down was treated with chocolate. But vassals called Kanakans, messengers and others leaned on their knees while they delivered what they had to say and then retired. The court was crowded and had more persons than the sultan's, demonstrating the rajah's superior influence.

Fakymolano's house stood just outside his son Rajah Mura's fort. Forrest had breakfast with him nearly every day. He found him to be a man of character, wisdom and bravery and had established peace after some civil wars.

But his brother's government was weak and as a result there were fresh disturbances. There were other troublemakers as well. Around May, Tuan Hadjee's people started to be very unruly and disobedient since Hadjee's attitude toward Forrest had turned cold since Balambangan was back in the hands of the Muslims.

On the 13th, Forrest had some sago leaves cut for covering the galley. Since the winds were southerly, he informed Rajah Mura that he was leaving for Balambanga to hoist the English colors and requested some people to crew for him in order to get rid of Tuan Hadjees' people. The young rajah replied that this might cause a rift between Maguindanao and Sulu. Hadjee was present and said before the Rajah and his father that he was not at all obliged to the English company since he had "greatly assisted" them.

Forrest countered that Hadjee was in the pay of the English company as captain of the Buggies and in which case was just doing his job. This remark provoked Hadjee but he didn't contradict it.

The following day Forrest discharged the Tuan Hadjee's people: Tuan Imum, the priest who ignored his orders; Saban who was good at cutting trees and making oars; Abdaraman, a Gilolo Kanakan; Andrew, another slave; and Dya, a sulky, morose rascal with long hair.

After settling accounts on the 15th with Tuan Hadjee, Forrest was astonished to find that the former was claiming his boat called a Banguey corocoro. While it was true that he had bought it at Tomoguy on their joint account, Forrest had paid for half of it. He told Hadjee that he would have Rajah Mura settle the matter since they had gotten along well so far and that he didn't wish to leave with any dispute.

The rajah adjudged the boat to belong to Forrest, who then told Hadjee that he could either sell it to him or buy him out. The latter became angry and said, "*Billa corocoro, tida mow bili, tida mow jual*(Split the corocoro, I will neither buy nor sell)." After that Solomonic decision, Hadjee walked out without making the usual salaam.

The next day the matter was settled, with Forrest buying Hadjee's half of the vessel. On the 17th, some nutmeg plants that one of the crew had preserved were taken out of their rooms by Hadjee's men and presented to Rajah Mura in his name. Baxter, one of Forrest's men, wanted to complain but was advised to keep silent although the plants had been paid for by an exchange of cloth with one of Hadjee's people at Manaswary.

On the 18th, Forrest told Rajh Mura that he had something to say to Tuan Hadjee and his men at the rajah's hall. He addressed Tuan Bobo and Tuan Assahan, acknowledging his obligation to them for accompanying him and assuring them that if it were in his power, he would reward them accordingly but being far from an English settlement, all he could do was present them with the banguey corocoro to make up for one they had left on the coast of New Guinea. Tuan Hadjee said nothing.

On the 3rd of July, a large proa belonging to Datu Malsalla, Rajah Mura's brother-in-law, arrived from a cruise on the coast of Celebes where it had engaged a Dutch sloop and was about to board when the Dutch set it on fire. Despite that, the attackers boarded the vessel and saved two brass swivel guns and even some clothes. They also brought with them 70 new slaves. The Dutch had been for some years attacking Mindanao so that a kind of war was ongoing, with the Muslims raiding the Moluccas islands.

Homesick

YOUNG BLOOD

Pauline Astrid P. Ferrer

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

GETTING on that plane is always very hard. After two glorious weeks at home, 14 splendid days of doing nothing but relaxing, hitting the sack in the wee hours of the morning and waking up past noon, spending quality time with the people you've yearned for in the past months, it becomes such a burden to get on that flight and go back to the heavy work load waiting for you.

Don't get me wrong, I am very grateful that I am in school when many others barely know how to read and write. But being away from home can, more often than not, fill you with the saddest feeling in the world. I am now in my junior year in college, and in a year or so, I will be marching up the stage to receive that much awaited diploma. But after three years of traveling back and forth whenever there's a long break, the feeling of homesickness still has not gone away.

There has been some improvement from the time when I was a naïve freshman and *probinsyana*. Back then, I would cry myself to sleep especially on weekends out of loneliness. I did not have many friends in school. Even though I am an extrovert, I preferred to be alone then. I left school right after classes, but I didn't go home right away because I knew I would just feel all the more lonely. I would just wander inside the huge malls, trying to entertain myself with window shopping. If I had some extra cash, I gave myself a little treat. I did things I thought I could never do, like watching a movie alone, and eating lunch all by myself in a cafeteria full of people.

My grades plunged to an all-time low during my first semester in the big city. I was saved from being dismissed by the school's system of assessing students on the basis of their performance over one school year. Much as I loved my school, when I returned home for the first time, a much bigger part of me just wanted to stay at home forever. I recall shedding a few tears as I was boarding the plane on my way back to Manila.

My second year was much better as I met a lot of wonderful people and opened up to them. I got actively involved in an organization, and spent more time in school. I stopped being a loner and tried out new things with people I had much in common with, people I could get easily along with. I was tired of being alone and having only my journal to retreat to whenever I felt very happy or extremely sad. I felt like I missed out on a lot during the year when I shut out the world, but then I also came to know myself more during that time, and I should be grateful for that instead of regretting a past I can no longer change.

I was away from home longer than I was in my first year, since I had summer classes, and my homesickness seemed more acute. It would make its presence felt most during Sundays, especially when I heard Mass by myself. Sunday was always family day back home, a day when we would all gather and have lunch at my grandmother's house, hear Mass in the afternoon, go to the mall, and sometimes meet the entire clan again for dinner. It took a while to adjust, but as with everything new, it just needed some getting used to.

At the end of the second year, I was convinced that when I got back home, I wouldn't be caught up in the sentimental mood that would come over me as the day of my departure for Manila neared. I was wrong. The moment I walked into the pre-departure area, the feeling again seeped through me. This time I was able to keep my tears from falling by telling myself I'd be back in a few months time. Before I knew it I would be back home again, I reassured myself. I struggled to flush out all the sadness inside and forced my mind to think happier thoughts.

Then came my junior year. The first two years were like play school compared to what I am going through. I have to spend endless nights finishing group projects, and even more sleepless nights in online meetings that last till five in the morning, crying out of frustration over getting grades of D or F+, and grabbing every chance to get some sleep.

But I never believed in having "all work, no play." I have also had my share of escapades and adventures with the friends, the people whose company I enjoy and who have also willingly accepted what I can share with them. I have become more independent now and revived the extrovert I have always been. I have become less hesitant to do anything outside my comfort zone. I am no longer timid and lonely or afraid to speak out. Lots of beautiful experiences, transformations, improvements, took place this year, which will forever be etched in my memory.

I was busiest during the first semester of my junior year, and I thought I had already flushed homesickness out of my system. Again, I was wrong. It wasn't as bad as before, but it was there nonetheless. And it still loved to show itself on Sundays. I tried to find ways to keep myself busy on those days, but I guess there are just some things you can never get away from.

During the last Christmas break, as with all Christmas breaks, it was the trip home I anticipated most. But this time, I was looking forward to what Christmas would be like more than as a cure for the homesickness. I couldn't wait for the much-needed break from all the pressure and stress of school work. Having this different kind of expectation was something I was proud of, since it seemed that I had finally gotten over the feeling that would get me down every time. If I were to pursue my plan of working in the big city, I should be used to the feeling of homesickness.

The Christmas break did not disappoint me at all. I had a fabulous time with my family—I could say it was the best Christmas I had so far. But when it was time to go, the feeling I thought I had put behind me came back and took over my entire being.

And this time it came much earlier. It came the night before I was to leave. My heart felt so heavy as I was packing my things, and the feeling got worse when my younger siblings said their own tearful goodbyes before they went to bed.

At the airport the next day, the feeling caught me again. I had to fight back my tears and tell myself to think of happier thoughts. Again, I told myself I wouldn't be going away for a very long time. But deep inside, I knew that every single time I go home, I would dread the moment when I have to leave.

Pauline Astrid P. Ferrer, 18, is a BS Communications Technology Management junior at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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The House must respect the courts

I AM not a lawyer or a political analyst but, to my mind, the House of Representatives is not handling the suspension of Reps. Rodolfo Valencia and Alfonso Umali Jr. in the proper way.

It is the Sandiganbayan that has original jurisdiction over the graft and corruption case against two. Therefore, only the Sandiganbayan may dispose of the case in accordance with due process of law. The suspension of the accused congressmen—while the case against them is being heard—is the necessary consequence of such jurisdiction and has for its basis the provisions of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Law.

To say that the Sandiganbayan's order of suspension violates the constitutional principle of the separation of power is wrong. The order of suspension is an assertion of judicial authority—an authority that the Speaker and the House of Representatives must respect unless they want to elevate the matter to the Supreme Court.

It is not proper even for the House committee on ethics to intervene and evaluate the propriety of the order because it has no authority to do so. It would have been a different story if the complaint was originally filed before the committee for acts done by the accused in connection with their duties as representatives.

Having said this, it is therefore incumbent upon Speaker Jose de Venecia to respect the process referred to the House for implementation without delay.

—ANDRES LOPEZ,
San Mateo, Rizal

Duty to one's country

I SHARE Leonardo de Vera's displeasure over a main street inside Fort Bonifacio named in honor of a US Army officer, Gen. Henry W. Lawton ("A historical irony," PDI, 1/28/05), whose command killed many Filipino soldiers during the Filipino-American War. The military official who christened the said street must have been an ardent admirer of Lawton, the most popular US Army general in 1898-1899, who had a very colorful record in the Union Army during the US Civil War and in the American Indian Wars that culminated in his capture of the wily Apache chief Geronimo. Standing six feet tall and always wearing a white "Balaclava" cork-sun helmet, he was never known to duck for cover even in the thick of battle, confident in his belief, it is said, that Filipino soldiers could not shoot straight anyway.

In the Battle of San Mateo, on the early morning of Dec. 18, 1899, Lawton's battalion was engaged by the Brigada Geronimo, who were in prepared positions and on high ground. During the gun battle, a heavy rain was pouring; and in the dawn's early light, Gen. Licerio Geronimo could see a tall man, wearing a bright yellow raincoat and a white sun helmet, rushing back and forth the firing line of American soldiers, exhorting them to sustain their fire. At this, Geronimo ordered a few of his "Tiradores de la Muerte" ("Shooters of Death") sharpshooters to concentrate their fire on the tall man in the yellow raincoat and white sun helmet! The "Tiradores" were armed with the latest model of the German-designed M1895 Mauser rifle—"The Best Combat Rifle in the World" at that time, which the Filipinos captured from defeated Spanish soldiers in 1898. The Americans were using an obsolete and poorly designed imported Swedish rifle—the Krag-Jorgensen. In a few minutes a Mauser bullet tore through the lungs of Lawton. Seconds later he expired.

Unknown to Lawton, the Filipino "Tiradores" were trained months before to become sharpshooters by US Army deserters, led by a Private David Fagan, who defected to the Filipino Army and fought alongside the Filipinos.

Sometime in the early 1900s, Mrs. Lawton revisited the Philippines and requested to meet personally the "killer" of her husband. Don Dominador Gomez, a prominent Manileño volunteered to relay the request of the widow and searched for Don Cerio. He found him quietly tending a small farm in the hinterlands of Laguna. Out of Filipino "delicadeza," Don Cerio politely declined Mrs. Lawton's invitation. Instead, he sent a photograph of himself wherein he wrote in Spanish: "Dear Madam: I am indeed very sorry to have caused the death of your beloved husband, but like him, I have also a duty to my country."—Gen. Licerio Geronimo.

—DANIEL H. DIZON,
War History Club of Angeles,
Villa Gloria, Angeles City

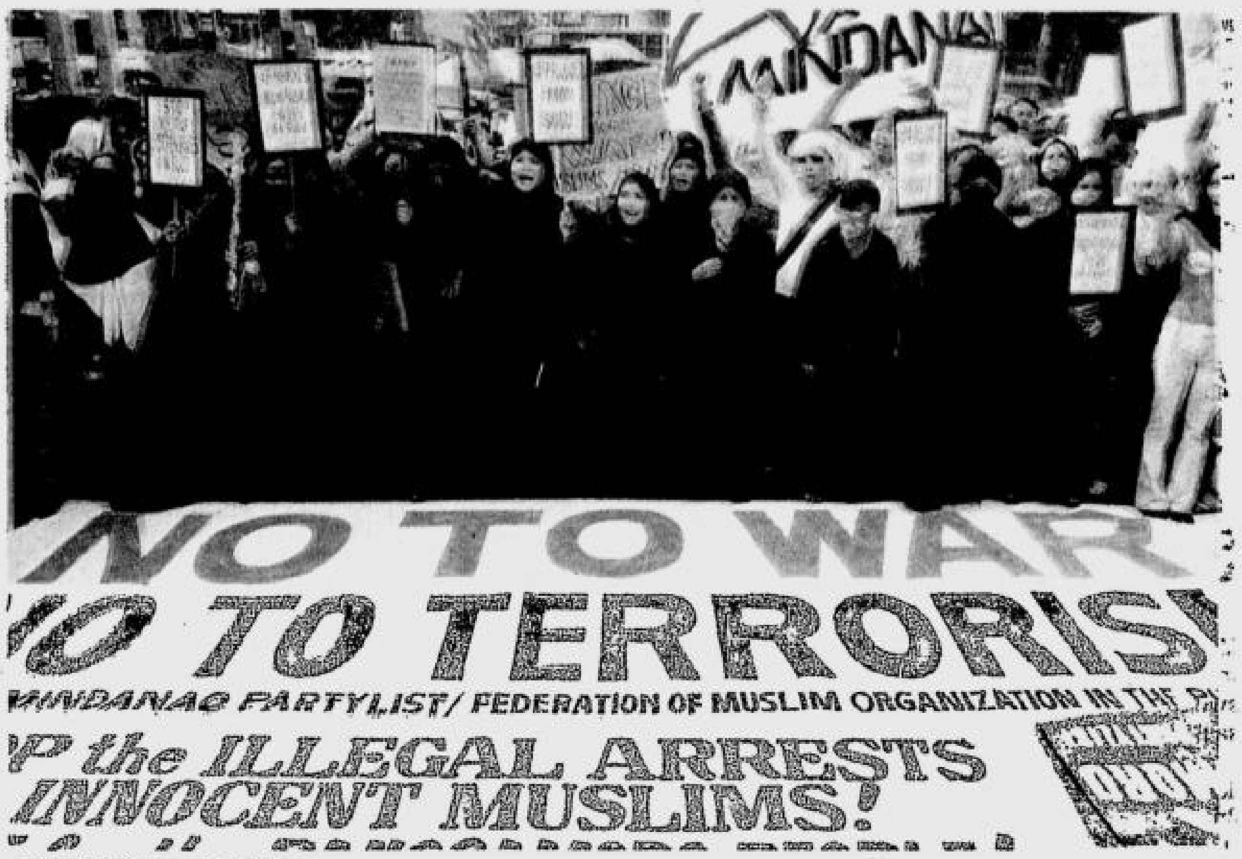
Why not an 'express train' also for the martial law victims

BEING a martial law victim myself (I was summarily detained at the Camp Vicente Stockade at Canlubang, Laguna for 10 long months in 1973 as an activist), I am quite elated to read in the Feb. 8 issue of the INQUIRER that no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo "has already recognized the need to indemnity the human rights victims."

It is, therefore, incumbent upon our legislators to immediately approve the human rights compensation bill. Many of the victims have grown old (like myself), while many more have died. As the saying in Filipino goes, "*Aanhin pa ang damo, kung patay na ang kabayo?*" (What do we do with the fodder, when the horse is dead?)

Moreover, to quote party-list Rep. Etta Rosales, "If they (Congress) can pass tax bills with the speed of an express train, they can do the same for the human rights victims."

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR,
vice mayor,
Pagsanjan, Laguna



EVERYBODY is against violence.

PDI PHOTO

What fuels the Mindanao war

THE WAR in Mindanao has been going on since the '70s. When is this going to end? If I read news about it, I feel sad because the Philippines is still my home even though I am living now in a foreign country.

We seem incapable of solving this problem. What kind of people are we? Are we inept and incapable? I can only tell you my view on why problems like the Muslim rebellion in the south flourishes. There are several factors, but the major ones are:

1) Rampant graft and corruption in all levels of government.

2) Red tape, which is characteristic of the bureaucracy and government service. In Europe, government papers are processed in two hours.

3) "Overcentralization" of government in Manila. Why should citizens from far-flung provinces have to go to Manila to get important personal documents, like birth certificates? Why can't provincial governments provide for this service?

4. Irresponsive politicians. The environment has been polluted for the past 30 years or so. But the government just ignore the problem, the polluters don't get fined! (Look at the Pasig River!) The majority of the populace still live in unsanitary conditions. The government does nothing against this. The list of government omissions is endless.

5. Lack of vision on the part of our politicians. When will our political leaders finally realize that massive investment has to be made throughout the country? In these fast-paced era, people should be able to move fast and easy. That means we need suitable roads, bridges, piers, and other important infrastructure everywhere, not just in Luzon. Hi-tech communication facilities, such as cellular phone, fax, Internet and the like, should cover and be accessible all throughout the country. Not just in big cities! One more thing: We have a lot of potentials for tourism, especially because we have plenty of beaches everywhere, and these have not been properly exploited up to now.

One gets the impression that the government is only out to get money from its citizens but never to serve them satisfactorily! This feeling makes citizens frustrated, desperate and angry. That many Filipinos rise up in arms, like some Muslims in the south, is not surprising. Not with the kind of politics and government we have!

—LOUIE DE GRACIA, Marienbadgasse
24/3, A-9073 Viktring, Austria

Let's rescue CAP

DURING the past few weeks, I stood and watched at the sidelines—like, I suppose, many CAP planholders did—listening to the barrage of negative reports about our beleaguered pre-need company. I witnessed how some of our fellow Filipinos seemed to take pleasure in exploiting our worst fears—that we have put our collective trust in the wrong institution, that because of this misplaced trust, our children's future has all but disappeared. It saddened me to see that all our government and media could do was to burn the College Assurance Plan at the stake; not realizing that they were burning as well our investments and our children's future with it.

Don't get me wrong. I am as alarmed as any parent who has invested her life savings to make sure her children would finish college. I would not, in any circumstance, condone irresponsibility and unaccountability in any pre-need company I happen to have entrusted with my money; even if Malacañang tells me the national economy had died on me.

What I am appealing for, to those who have chosen to take up our cause, is a rational, win-win approach to the CAP dilemma. I have always believed in the intrinsic Filipino value of *bayanihan*—the familial unity of every Filipino, especially in times of dire need. I believe this is the same spirit that had driven CAP into putting up the first educational pre-need company of its kind in the Philippines; the same reason why there are almost 800,000 of us putting in our money as planholders.

I join the hundreds of thousands of parents, who, while vigilantly looking after their children's interest, are sympathetic to the efforts of CAP to survive this crisis. But woe, I say, to those who hold selfish business and political interests above those of the future leaders of our country.

I would like to understand the impatience of big universities to which CAP owes payment. But to vent their ire on CAP students, whose only fault is to trust their folks' investments, is a mockery of the magnanimity of education; an undeniable testimony to the hapless commercialization of education in the country.

I would like to appreciate our government officials' proposals on how to move CAP into living up to its promise. But, I cannot comprehend how all their pronouncements would encourage more investors to prop up the sorry state of the educational support sector that had given us what the government had not—affordable college education.

Government should lead the way in rescuing a decade-old, homegrown educational support institution. It is the least it can do; after all, they have all but failed to provide the working masses—such as myself—free, much less affordable, quality education. Let's rescue CAP.

—TRINIDAD S. SINGH

No gains from the Sulu war

THE HAWKISH attitude of President Macapagal-Arroyo toward the Muslims in Sulu has gained us nothing but deadly terrorist bombings and thousands of civilian refugees. To be fair, GMA must also condemn not just the rebels but the soldiers. The soldiers started the war and drew first blood. The first encounter was on Feb. 5, where innocent Muslim women and children were reportedly massacred by soldiers. The second was a retaliation on Feb. 7, where the rebels attacked a detachment, and soldier casualties were high. The Feb. 7 clash hit the front page, but the initial massacre hardly made the news, coming out only after Muslim spokespersons brought it out.

A rapid, eye-for-an-eye escalation of the conflict followed. Helicopter gunships and US-trained anti-terrorists using new sophisticated weapons, such as night vision, were thrown into the melee. Cornered, the Muslims resorted to urban bombings on Valentine's Day.

If GMA had ordered an investigation into the massacre, then perhaps the Muslims would have believed she was sincere in seeking justice, and they might not have resorted to urban bombings. But no, listening only to her generals, she went for war, eye for an eye, and we are all suffering because of this hawkish stance.

—BERNIE LOPEZ,
eastwind@edsamail.com.ph

Futile exercise

EVEN if we passed 100 value added tax laws, it will be for naught if business establishments do not issue receipts and the consuming public does not ask for them.

—PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court,
Malanday, Marikina City

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What are your memories of EDSA / People Power 1?

i can still picture in my mind d 1st time i saw columns of soldiers marching in Edsa while my heart was pounding nervously!
—serafin santos basco, *pasig city*

my memory of Edsa—when a soldier was hit at d entrance of PTV4. i saw him downed by a bullet…
—Verona BALANGUE, *cagayan de oro*

My wife and I were in the province. For 3 nerve-wracking days,
we were glued to our radio praying for the country.
—Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., *Naga City*

may booth ang Min. of Finance nuon near Poea. We were allowed 2 go 2 Edsa, may snacks pa frm mcdo—at nilakad namin POEA 2 Kamuning
—VERÖNA BALANGUE, *cagayan de oro*

I was at the wrong place at the wrong time. How I wish I was there…
—Cesar Marinius M. Reyes, *Agusan del Norte*

as a boy, Edsa 1 was like a movie thru TV. But 2 see people push tanks, nuns give flowers to soldiers, it was not a movie. Next day, i heard we were free. 4 me, it was good…
—jerico panibio, *qc*

…it was announced over the radio that Marcos has left Malacanan palace…
—dan ballener, *iloilo*

When it was confirmed that Marcos and his family had left, I remember me and my family and friends were jumping up and down the streets in amazing happiness and in ecstasy!!! Ü
—richard, *manila*

I was very young then everything just happened so fleetingly miraculous!
—Lemuel Rodriguez, *Dumaguete City*

memories of Filipinos freeing the Philippines from oppression and the downfall of oppressors.
—may g. malapitan, *quezon city*

huag nating kalimutan ang pinaglaban natin sa edsa!

There were many who fought against the Marcos dictatorship even before Edsa. But Edsa was the culmination of outrage and protests where Filipinos were courageous and united. So many individuals, families and organizations risked their lives by being warm bodies in Edsa. We wanted the dictatorship to finally end. We were so hungry for freedom. We wanted a government that was not corrupt and which worked truly for the people.
—Ana, *U.P. Diliman*

eto ang kauna-unahan kong binyag sa kilusang masa, nagpaalab at nagluwal ng bagong katauhan ko.
—Eduardo Cacayuran, *Rosario, Cavite*

Do you think the proposed national I.D. system will be useful in the fight against terrorism?

NIDS system? dis is a Non-stop Intrusion 2 privacy dat would Deprive access 2 Services & restrict freedom of movement! (NIDS). National I.D. System ba kamo? NIDS ba talaga yan? baka naman Negative Impact & Destructive Service ito sa mamamayan—NIDS.
—Elmer Guevara, *urdaneta city*

Yes, recent bombings call 4 extraordinary measures. only d lawless elements must be paranoid against natl. i.d. system
—jack rubiano, *samal, bataan*

Definitely! D national i.d. wil b very useful on dis aspect
—dr. jessie albeus, *naga city*

i do not believe an I.D. system could put a stop to terrorism
—Katherine MARTE, *Bacolod city*

In these crucial days, everybody may commit terror acts, especially when ders money involved, ID system is of no use 4 me
—sherryl aquino, *paniqui, tarlac*

Partly yes, since terrorism was caused by injustice, illiteracy and poverty. Thus I.D. system will be good.
—Ern Dancel, *Urdaneta City*

No! Will a terrorist be foolish enough to put his own name on an I.D.? No, he will change his identity.
—ROLANDO P. HERRERA, *sampaloc, manila*

YES. Peace and national security in status quo. It will serve as a warning to any person who wants to get into terrorism. YES. It can minimize, if not totally eradicate terrorism as the root cause of evil, and worse for innocent people.
—Greg Saraos, *Intramuros, Manila*

NO, bcoz people can easily falsify documents. Not even I.D., so ders no assurance dat da person handling da I.D. is da owner of it.
—marivic jalasco, *pasig*

d proposed i.d. system wil b useful in beefing up corruptiOn, nOt fighting against terrorism
—froilan garma, *tarlac*

hindi me naniwalang kayang solve ng natl ID systm problema natin sa terrorism, kc ito i nagmumumula sa mamamayan mism0, di sa aTing batas o sa an0 pa man.
—ELVIRA T. Chin, *N. Samar*

it is better that we do have a national i.d. becoz it can limit terrorists
—regie a. escaño, *tondo, manila*

I.D. system will be a way 2 track down people. I don't think we R ready 4 dis. it is not as easy as just installing a computer.
—leila peralta, *qc*

what? No way, dis is an Irrelevant Disguise of Service—(NIDS), a Big Brother tool 2 spy on Filipinos!
—elmer Guevara, *urdaneta city*

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Troops kill 5 kidnap suspects

MAGUINDANAO—Five members of the Pentagon kidnap for ransom gang were killed when government troops swooped down on a suspected kidnappers' lair in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao at dawn yesterday.

Col. Gerry Jalandoni, commander of the Army's 604th Infantry Brigade, said the "pre-emptive operation" was carried out with the help of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas.

Killed were alleged sub-commander Natua Dayato, a certain Commander Gani, a certain Commander Malanao and two others who remained unidentified.

The soldiers also recovered two rocket-propelled grenade launchers with four ammunition and an M-16 Armalite rifle.

Jalandoni said before the Scout Rangers struck on the suspected safehouse, it coordinated with MILF guerrillas in the area to prevent a clash between the guerrillas and the soldiers.

The government and the MILF has a ceasefire agreement while awaiting the resumption of peace talks in Malaysia.

"The MILF provided us some information about the gang and they informed us of their (MILF's) location so there was no mis-encounter," he said.

Jalandoni said villagers reported to authorities about the presence of Pentagon gang members who were tagged as those behind the ambush of a police major and three of his men in Datu Paglas town.

Suspected Pentagon gang members killed Chief Insp. Joselito Cabang, regional police intelligence officer, two of his men and a driver, in an ambush while they were on their way to meet Commander Tahir last month.

Cabang was negotiating for the surrender of Tahir when the ambush occurred.

Jalandoni, quoting intelligence reports, said the group was planning to launch a series of kidnappings in Tacurong City, Koronadal City and nearby areas.

"When they were sighted in the Liguasan Marshland of Sultan sa Barongis, it was an indication their spotters (kidnapper conducting surveillance) were out to abduct and hand over the victim to the marshland," Jalandoni said.

A woman soft drink distributor, kidnapped on Feb. 5 last year, remains in the hands of her Pentagon gang kidnappers in Central Mindanao. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Laoag mayor says he welcomes raps to show he's innocent of slay

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Laoag City Mayor Michael Fariñas said he welcomed the plan of the National Bureau of Investigation to file murder charges against him in connection with the killing of Vice Mayor Jimmy Chua last Feb. 2.

"I welcome the filing of murder charges by the NBI since this will give me the opportunity to present pieces of evidence and eventually clear my name from these baseless accusations," Fariñas said in a press statement sent to the INQUIRER.

Fariñas maintained he is innocent of the charges being leveled against him by Councilor Melvin de la Cuesta, the supposed eyewitness who had earlier told police investigators that a hired killer identified as a certain "Steve" was the one who shot Chua in front of the Eagles Nest Restaurant in Laoag City.

Sworn before

"I am just wondering why Councilor De la Cuesta made the statement to the NBI when in fact he had already made three sworn statements previously subscribed under oath before the Laoag City Fiscal's office," Fariñas said.

Fariñas said he was informed that a member of a powerful political clan was behind the turnaround of De la Cuesta.

Security for his family supposedly led De la Cuesta to buy time before he linked Mayor Fariñas to the Feb. 2 killing of Chua and retracted his earlier statement pointing to hired guns as behind the murder.

Days before he broke his silence on Friday and tagged Fariñas as having "accidentally shot" Chua, De la Cuesta had reportedly herded his wife and children to seek protective custody from the NBI.

Earlier testimony

The councilor had pointed to a gunman identified as "alias Steve" of Sinait, Ilocos Sur, as the one who shot Chua in front of the Eagle's Nest Restaurant here. Another suspect and the gunman's companion were on board a motorcycle when the shooting occurred.

De la Cuesta said his previous statement identifying two motorcycle-riding men as the hit men "was all sham and concocted (meant to) cover up the shooting."

He could have also been prodded to tell the truth after initial autopsy findings by NBI forensic experts on Feb. 16 showed that aside from a bullet wound in the right temple, Chua also bore contusions at the back of his head and in the neck indicating that he was hit with a hard object and strangled.

The findings also reportedly showed blood traces inside the bar where the mayor was seated.

The NBI forensic team, led by Dr. Ludivino Lagat, Dr. Alicia Liberato and Lito Basilio, however, has yet to release its official findings on the autopsy it conducted 10 days after Chua's remains were buried.

Fariñas had immediately denied De la Cuesta's accusations and described the councilor's turnaround as a demolition job of a "powerful political clan" in the Ilocos Region.

No identities

Fariñas refused to identify who was behind the supposed demolition job but claimed that the councilor was taken to an undisclosed place for five days and was "forced to sign" a document linking the mayor to the killing.

The mayor had said Supt. Joel Pagdilao, then city police chief, had left the bar around past midnight of Feb. 2 or at least three hours before the shooting took place. Pagdilao was relieved from his post three weeks after Chua's murder.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos said De la Cuesta's disclosure was "a sad moment for the city and a shame to the province."

For his part, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said it was premature to draw any conclusion while the investigations were ongoing.

"It is incumbent upon everyone to wait for the completion of the investigation of this unfortunate incident," Marcos said in a statement.

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Philippine Trade Training Center,
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Time	Program
March 1	
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Outlook and Merchandising Trends for the Middle East: Focus on the United Arab Emirates By: Ms. Maggie Moore Editorin-in-Chief, Gulf Interiors
3:30pm - 5:00pm	Design and Merchandising Trends for Europe: Focus on Italy By: Ms. Vanessa Barcaccia Import Manager, ICIB srl Mr. Italico Barcaccia Owner, ICIB srl
March 2	
10:00am - 12:00nn	Design and Product Development: Overview and Trends By: Ms. Janet Guinto Ms. Rowe Requejo Designers, PDDCP
2:00pm - 3:30pm	Culminating Seminar for the Design and Product Development Program of CFIP, PDDCP and PEARL2
March 3	
10:00am - 12:00nn	Communication Technology: Facilitating Business in the 21st By: Mr. Paul Chong International Sales Manager, NET2PHONE-Asia Pacific Mr. Jonas Santiago and Mr. Arnold Despi Managing Partners, RADJTech Ms. Amelia Cabansay President, Virtual Route Philippines
2:00pm - 4:30pm	Abrasives and Finishing Technologies: Furniture and Woodworking Solutions By: Mr. Gerald Trinidad Sr. Sales Representative, 3M Phil Mr. Don Pascual Technical Manager, Syntema Manila, Inc.

For seminar details, fees and discounts, contact the Show Secretariat at Tel. no.: 551-5226

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HOUSE INVESTIGATION

Lapid son to surface in quarry probe

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid is appearing in today's congressional investigation of the provincial government's quarry revenues, making this his first showdown with his erstwhile political ally and now staunch critic Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao.

"He will attend," provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas said of the governor's appearance in the House committee on natural resources.

Lapid, 26, was absent in the first hearing on Feb. 9. Pampanga Rep. Reynaldo Aquino filed House Resolution 267 last year seeking an inquiry into the "income-generating prospects of the quarry industry" in the light of national and local fiscal deficits.

Exposés by Guiao showed a P337-million discrepancy in the collections of the Natural Resources Development Corp. from 1999 to 2001 and the provincial government from 2002 to 2004 or during the last and final term of the governor's father, former governor and now Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid.

Guiao accused the father and son of committing "corruption in the magnitude of plunder."

Governor Lapid did not report for work on Monday, saying he was sick with fever. Sources said he was preparing for the hearing through a meeting with the senator.

"Nervous" was how a source described the young Lapid on the eve of the hearing. But Arcenas said the governor was certainly coming because this time, committee chair, Agusan Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, specifically asked for Lapid's attendance in the hearing.

The governor skipped the Feb. 9 hearing, saying he had to fulfill previous commitments. Senator Lapid, Arcenas said, did not receive an invitation to attend the hearing. He said he, the governor, provincial treasurer Vergel Yabut and provincial legal officer Regina Guarin would be "courteous and respectful to the committee."

Arcenas said this was in the light of tension that transpired in the previous hearing. There, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo castigated Arcenas for "lecturing the committee on laws when he was not a lawyer."

NRDC Chair Victor Corpus, for his part, assailed Arcenas for "misleading" the committee by reporting on the provincial government's share and not on the NRDC annual collections. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Artists put new face on concrete pine tree

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

THE "DRESSED-UP" concrete pine tree with a new look. PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

BAGUIO CITY—This city woke up on Friday, the 1986 Edsa People Power celebration, to find the notorious Baguio concrete pine tree here "totally defiled."

In the still of the night, fine arts students of the University of the Philippines Baguio dressed up the cement tree in clown colors, using gigantic papercraft flowers and smiling butterflies that are labeled with the phrase: "Plant a real pine tree next time."

Their final touch is a paper *bulol* made by a 20-year-old artist from Hungduan, Ifugao. "They made an unnatural tree out of the natural and it is [offensive]," said Adrian Waya.

One of the most controversial public structures in Baguio today, the concrete pine tree was built by the Department of Public Works and Highways in 1994.

Terra cota sculptor Robert Acosta, a UP fine arts professor, said they camouflaged their protest with flowers and toyland insects to blend well with today's Baguio flower festival parade.

But they could not bury what has been a series of artistic initiatives to correct what has been "very wrong" about the summer capital for decades.

Artists of the Tahong Bundok group climbed an abandoned building in downtown Baguio on Friday to paint over its grimy facade.

Pyx Picart and Bayard Aquitania drew cartoonish portraits around the shattered windows and soot-covered walls of the old Bombay Bazaar Building, assisted by teenagers.

All throughout February, people watch young artists replace Baguio's decades-old sidewalk potholes with artistic murals.

"We received a lot of complaints when we installed mosaic murals to fill up the sidewalk potholes but that's part of the revolution. Artists want to see a better Baguio," said Kawayan de Guia, last year's Philip Morris Juror's Choice.

"The artists feel the call to their role as members of a community that dwells in a decaying urban set-up," said music video director Ferdinand John Balanag. "The artists are struggling to counter an over politicized urban planning system."

"They've seen so much of the old Baguio [that they know what needs to be done]. You can see it in their bodies of work," said installation artist Antonio Romawac.

But the Thursday evening "attack" on the concrete pine tree was also inspired by frustrations, said Acosta, an environmentalist.

Cavite steel firm gets certification from int'l body

A STEEL company based in Cavite was recently awarded an ISO 9001-2000 certification by the Governing Board of Certification International Philippines Inc., making it the first in the country to comply with international standards.

The certification, which was awarded to SSI last Jan. 23, covers the manufacture of Hot Dip Zinc Coated Steel Sheets for three years.

SSI, which has its plant in Trece Martires, Cavite, is the first one of its kind in the country to receive the certification, according to an SSI press statement.

The entire organization had to go through the grueling process of system and operations improvement to comply with the standards set by the ISO.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a global organization of national standards bodies that coordinate to ensure quality assurance in a globalized environment.

Plant operations manager Richard Tan Oasis credits the quick awarding of the certification to the concerted effort of all the departments to comply with ISO standards.

"This certification was a result of a concerted effort from all of SSI's departments to achieve the highest standard in all aspects of our operations," he said.

According to Quality Management Representative Annie Nasayao, a key ingredient in the granting of the certification is the creation and implementation of high quality standards.

"We have always strived for excellence," said Nasayao, "and this certification is proof."

2 fires hit Cebu on eve of anti-fire month

CEBU CITY—Some P1.7 million worth of property went up in smoke yesterday when two separate fires hit the cities of Cebu and Lapu-lapu, a day before the official start of the Fire Prevention Month.

Twelve houses were destroyed and two others were damaged when fire broke out at about 3:45 a.m. on Don P. Rodriguez Street, Capitol Site in Cebu City.

SFO1 Ali Kasim Espinola, Cebu City Fire Department investigator, said an investigation was still being conducted to determine what triggered the fire that started from the house of a certain Niña Potot.

But the fire, he added, destroyed about P800,000 worth of property.

Fifteen houses were also razed to the ground while three others were damaged when fire broke out at about 4:26 p.m. at Sitio Paradise, Pajo, Lapu-lapu City on Mactan Island, Cebu.

SFO1 Atilano Berido, Lapu-lapu Fire Department investigator, said the blaze started from the house of Roy Booc, which was being occupied by his friend, Kelly Verano and wife, Daisy.

He said electrical misuse might have triggered the fire after neighbors told investigators that they heard something spark inside the house before the fire broke out.

Berido said the fire was put under control after four minutes, as the firewall built in the area prevented the blaze from spreading.

No one was hurt in the two fires although fire officials were asking the public to be careful, as the country gears up for the launching today of the Fire Prevention Month.

The Fire Prevention Month is celebrated every March because it is in this month when most fires occur in the country, said Supt. Esmael Codilla, Cebu City Fire Marshall.

Berido said the Lapu-lapu City fire department would hold a Mass at about 8 a.m. and then a motorcade all over the city.

He added the fire department would also hold several fire prevention seminars in the different establishments in March. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

6 cops sacked for escape of ship with smuggled rice

BUTUAN CITY—Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay ordered the dismissal from service of two senior police officers and four other policemen for the escape of a cargo vessel carrying P18.7 million worth of smuggled rice here in 2002.

Aglipay's order, which was released Feb. 17, came less than a year after anti-graft chief Simeon Marcelo made the recommendation to the police chief against the policemen for alleged grave misconduct when the vessel managed to escape along with the contraband while in their custody at the Masao Port here.

Ordered dismissed were Senior Supt. Efren Anggo, this city's police director; Supt. Felix Gonzales, police director of Surigao del Sur; Senior Insp. Reynaldo Batoon, SPO4 Domingo Lucero Jr., PO3 Ignacio Espina and PO2 Jessie Doce.

Chief Supt. Rene Elumbaring, regional police chief, said he has no other option but to act on the order and urge his men to respect Aglipay's order.

Anggo vowed to contest the decision order before the Court of Appeals, reiterating his innocence over the escape of the cargo vessel.

He said he was confident that the CA would eventually rule in their favor.

On July 11, 2002, police and coast guard operatives intercepted MV Rodeo while unloading some 17,000 sacks of smuggled rice but the following day it disappeared and sailed for Cebu. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQTV < inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <edad>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, at ipadala sa 2910. Winners will be identified on InqTV, Thursdays on ABC.
Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 4pm

text 2910

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Cafgus take on 'new enemy'

ISABELA CITY—The military has started teaching paramilitary forces in Basilan how to be more humane.

Aside from learning how to maim enemies of the state, at least 2,500 members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) here are also being taught about respect for human rights, culture of peace, population management, value formation, gender sensitivity, leadership and community relations and even life saving techniques and first aid.

The military's partner for the endeavor include the Christian Children Fund and the Population Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Dominican Sisters, the Association of Barangay Captains and the Interior Department and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Personnel from the Department of Trade and Industry also teach them about livelihood opportunities.

Forty-two-year-old Said Samson of Barangay Buton in Tuburan town said he was hesitant to attend the training.

He said he was afraid he could not adapt to the new training modules.

A Cafgu member since 2000, Samson said before, their only concern is how to stay alive during gunfights and how to inflict damage on the enemy.

Scepter Deogracias, 26, of Upper Maligue, Isabela City, admitted that being a Cafgu makes one feel that he is powerful than unarmed civilians.

He said this could be the reason many Cafgus are "detached" from their communities.

He said what they regularly do is to clean their weapons for the next military operation against rebels that they often ignore their other domestic duties and community activities.

Col. Raymundo Ferrer, commander of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade based in Basilan, said the training modules were designed to focus on self-reformation among the militiamen.

Cafgu members became notorious as violators of human rights in the country.

"They are waging a new war, not against the Abu Sayyaf group, but against their inner selves," Ferrer said.

He said "at least, our Cafgu are evolving to become better persons, not war oriented, but peace builders."

Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Student groups say budget cuts to hike tuition

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Members of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) and various student organizations here assailed the government for reducing the budget of the Department of Education and state colleges and universities (SCUs).

John Panem, coordinator of the NUSP Baguio-Benguet chapter, said the budget cut demonstrates the government's abandonment of public education.

"It is a great contradiction that the Arroyo administration is looking for quality education when in fact, it is not giving the sector the right attention," Panem said in press forum here.

NUSP records said the DepEd's budget was down to P102.9 billion this year after a budget cut of P4.6 billion. The budget of SCUs was down to P15.72 billion, from the proposed P16.67 billion.

Tuition hike

Panem said the budget cut would force SCUs to increase their tuition and miscellaneous fees.

He said their study showed that some SCUs in the Cordillera have proposed to increase their tuition between 150 percent and 400 percent.

Baguio-based student groups such as NUSP, League of Filipino Students, College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP), Progressive Igorots for Social Action (Pigsa) and Anakbayan also assailed the government for allotting a bigger budget for the Philippine Military Academy.

P43 per student

"[Our studies showed that] the government will allot P568.17 million for PMA this year. A measly P43 is spent for every student of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines daily. A PMA cadet, on the other hand, is subsidized by P1,420 a day," Panem said.

He said only 8,900 of the 61,240 college freshmen who enrolled in 2000 graduated last year.

Panem said high tuition and the government's dwindling budget for education were among the factors in the decline in the number of college graduates in the region.

SC approves transfer of Damalerio case to Cebu

PAGADIAN CITY—The Supreme Court has granted the request to transfer to Cebu City the venue of the hearing of the case of slain journalist Edgar Damalerio.

The First Division of the SC, in its resolution dated Feb. 14, 2005, granted the request of Gemma Damalerio, widow of slain journalist Damalerio.

Acting presiding Judge Rolando Goan of the Regional Trial Court Branch 20 here was directed by the SC to desist from hearing the case "immediately upon receipt of notice."

The SC resolution were signed by Enriqueta Esguerra-Vidal, clerk of court, First Division and Edgar Aricheta, assistant clerk of court, First Division.

The SC First Division also directed the RTC Executive Judge of Cebu City to "immediately raffle the case among the judges of different branches thereat."

The court in Cebu was also directed to "conduct a continuous trial to be terminated within three months from receipt of the records."

At the same time, prison authorities at the Pagadian City Reformatory Center was also ordered to transfer the accused, former policeman Guillermo Wapile, to the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center in Lahug, Cebu City.

The SC also ordered prison authorities to implement tight security measures "to prevent the possible escape of the accused while in confinement . . . or while going to and returning from . . . the trial of his case at the Regional Trial Court where the case will be raffled."

A team from the Witness Protection Program (WPP) of the Department of Justice relocated the family of Damalerio's widow, Gemma, the remaining principal witness Edgar Ongue and Erlinda Amoro, wife of another witness, Edgar Amoro, who was gunned down Feb. 2. *Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

UN plan to make 12 cities help poor takes off

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—Vice President Noli de Castro lauded on Thursday the efforts of local governments in 12 cities in pursuing the United Nations-set Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a strategy for helping the poor.

The pursuit of the goals was a "major step in answering the problems that affect the poor in the country," he said.

De Castro was guest speaker during the launching of the MDG targets of this city and groundbreaking rites for various development projects in a demonstration village here.

He congratulated the city government, headed by Mayor Nestor Alvarez, for "coming out with well-planned targets for the localized MDGs" and for setting at once a demonstration site for the various development projects intended to be pursued here.

The MDGs were set by the United Nations in 2000 as a strategy for helping the poor in different countries. The Philippine government, along with 188 governments, committed to pursue the goals during its ratification in September 2001.

With the help of the business sector and through the collaboration of the National Economic and Development Authority, United Nations Development Program, office of the UN resident coordinator, Philippine Business for Social Progress-Center for Corporate Citizenship, 12 cities committed to support the local MDGs.

These pilot cities are Antipolo, Calbayog, Iligan, Island Garden of Samal, Madaue, Marikina, Muntinlupa, Pasay, San Jose del Monte, Tagaytay, Sorsogon, and the Science City of Muñoz.

The goals they agreed to pursue are those that aimed to eradicate poverty, achieve universal access to education, promote gender equality and empowerment of women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases, ensure environment sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development.

UN resident coordinator Deborah Landey congratulated the House of Representatives for creating a special committee on the MDGs.

The committee vice chair is Akbayan Sectoral Rep. Mario Mayong Agoja. He also spoke during the program and joined the other activities here.

Landey said international partners, have responded positively in helping the MDG targets in the country. *Anselmo Roque, Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

Cheating on rice bared

COTABATO CITY—Rice dealers at the city's two public markets are complaining of underweight bags of rice distributed by private traders in Central Mindanao. "Commercial rice supplied by traders from Tacurong City and Isulan (in Sultan Kudarat) are underweight by as much as four kilos," said rice vendor Cresencio Salvador. He said a sack of rice computed to have 50 kilograms of grains would weigh much less when it reaches the public market. "It is due to some activity by traders of checking on the quality of grains by using a stainless stick," he said. "A kilo or two underweight is acceptable but more than that is too much," he added. Kitem Kadatuan, National Food Authority manager for Maguindanao and Cotabato City, admitted receiving reports about it. "We are checking it," he said, admitting some traders are unscrupulous.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Ambush kills farmer

PIGCAWAYAN, North Cotabato—A farmer was killed while another was wounded in a late afternoon ambush in Barangay Villarica here Friday. Killed was Jiji Gerodiaz, 40. His companion, Edgar Salinas, was wounded. Salinas, who is now recuperating in a government hospital here, told reporters that they came from nearby Midsayap town and were on their way home when ambushed by two men armed with 12-gauge shot guns. Salinas said the suspects fired at least four shots at Gerodiaz who was driving the motorcycle. It was not known why the suspects attacked Gerodiaz.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Dengue's first victim

TAGBILARAN CITY—A five-year-old boy was the first fatality of dengue fever in Bohol this year, records at the Provincial Health Office (PHO) said. The fatality was identified as Jumar Ranullo of Panglao town who died of dengue fever in January. Last year, dengue killed five people in the province. PHO statistician Merlyn Nemenzo said the number of dengue cases reached 36 with Tagbilaran City still the most affected with 16 cases. Panglao and Sikatuna accounted for three cases each while 12 other towns had one case each. Meanwhile, heart diseases were the no. 1 killer in Bohol in 2004. It topped the 10 leading causes of mortality in the province, claiming the lives of 940 people in the province last year. Pneumonia ranked second with 687 cases. Cancer of all types was the cause of death of 454 people while cardiovascular disease claimed the lives of 332 people. Kidney diseases killed 243 people while hypertension was blamed for 198 deaths.

Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

KOREAN MEDICINE Thousands of residents of Trece Martires City in Cavite benefited from the free medical services recently provided by the Korean Oriental Medicine Service Team Abroad (KOMSTA) headed by Dr. Park In-Ki. Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi, who invited KOMSTA, said the KOMSTA doctors provided a different type of medical service by using needles and power granules instead of stethoscope to diagnose their ailments.

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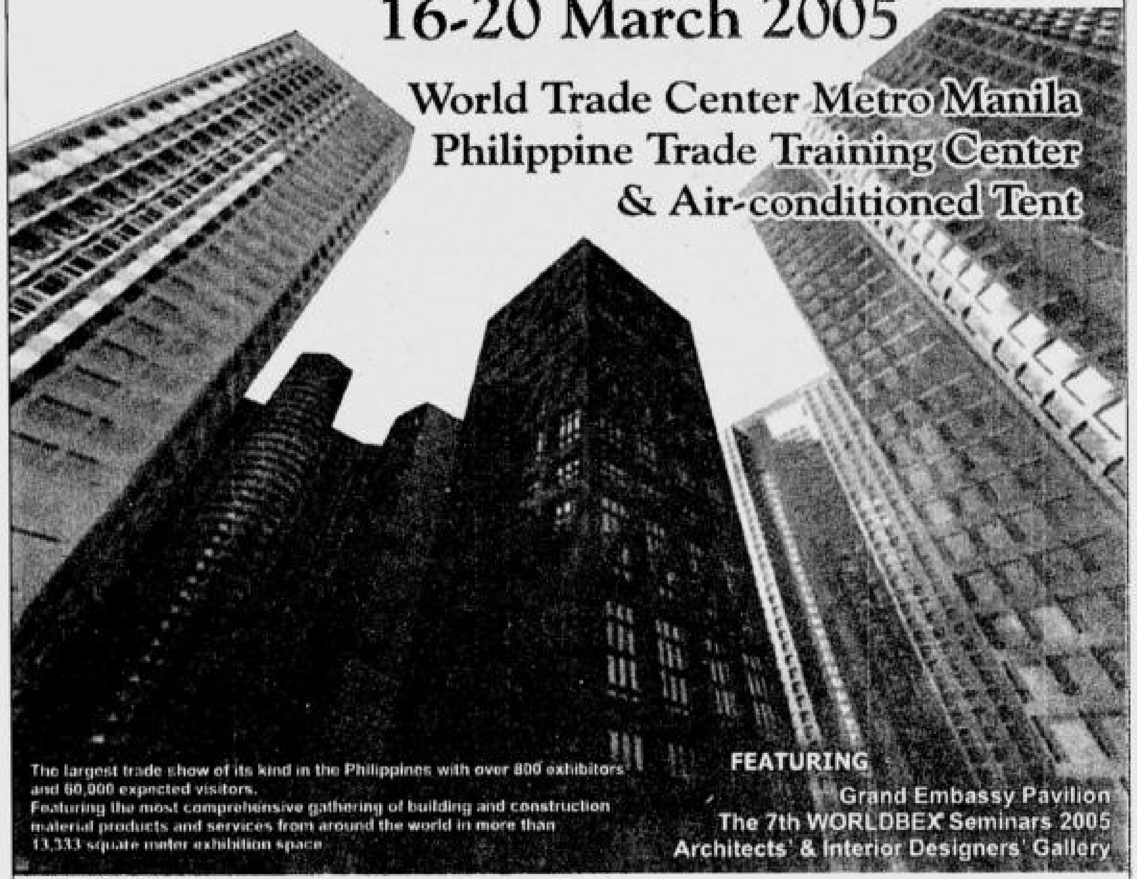

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- Switch off main switch when leaving the house
- Keep matches and lighters in a safe place and away from children
- Avoid octopus connections
- Check gas leaks before using the stove
- Placed oil or gas lamps away from curtain and put out the flame before sleep
- Never store volatile and flammable substance in your house or keep them away from kitchen or hot places
- Extinguished with water live charcoals and embers after cooking barbecue
- Don't set bonfires on windy days or let your children play with it.
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MARCH 2005
PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

OPR-National Headquarters	
March 1, 2005 5:00 – 7:00AM	FUN RUN – SM North EDSA to QC Memorial Circle to be participated in by all BFP National Headquarters, ORD NCR, Region 3, Region 4A, FNTI, Volunteer Fire Brigades, LGU's, LCE and SOPI
7:30 – 8:30 AM	Holy Mass - QC Memorial Circle
9:00 – 12:00 AM	Opening Ceremonies
March 03, 2005	Nationwide Poster-Making Contest – all school levels (NCR participants - SM Megamall)
March 05, 2005	Fire Brigade Competition UE Compound Caloocan City
March 16, 2005	On-the-Spot Drawing Contest - all school levels- SM North EDSA QC
March 19, 2005	Essay Writing Contest - Elementary and High School -Ali Mall, Cubao, QC Medico Olympics to be conducted by the EMS. First High Rise Building Competition - Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
March 31, 2005	Culminating Ceremony
[illegible] Region	
March 01, 2005 5:00 – 7:00 AM	Simultaneous blowing of horns of all firefighting apparatus
March 2005	Industrial/Commercial Fire Brigade Competition 13th NCR Barangay Fire Brigade Competition Fire Drills and Fire-related activities BFP NCR Fire Olympics – to be participated in by representatives from District 1-1V (Fire Hose Relay, Rescue Operation, Tug of war, Roof Climbing, Engine Relay, Turret Target, Blitz Attack)
[illegible] Offices	
March 1, 2005 5:00 – 7:00 AM	FUN RUN – to be participated in by urban, all RD, PFM and highly urbanized CFM Offices in each respective region Fire Olympics – to be participated in by all stations in each regions Fire Hose Relay (Rescue Operation, Tug of war, Roof Climbing, Engine Relay, Turret Target, Blitz Attack, Five in one hose game) Parade of Firetrucks/EMS vehicles/Volunteer Fire Brigades with Berong Bumbero to be participated in by all RD, PFM and highly urbanized CFM Offices in each region.
11:00 AM	Simultaneous blowing of horns of all firefighting apparatus Primary School - Distribution of posters, comics, stickers, photographic streamers Conduct of lectures on all types of occupancies Open house on all Fire Stations in each region Barangay Ugnayan and visibility image-building campaign Monitoring of Fire Hazard in backyard economics activities (small cottage industries and incineration of waste materials)
March 2005	Industrial/Commercial Drill Campaign
March 31, 2005	Culminating ceremonies

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Clint, 'Million Dollar Baby' top Oscars

CATE Blanchett wins Oscar trophy for best supporting actress for her role in "The Aviator."

MORGAN Freeman grabs his Oscar for best supporting actor ("Million Dollar Baby"). PHOTOS BY AP

From page A1

Charles in "Ray."

Vindication

The success of "Million Dollar Baby" marked a personal vindication for Eastwood, who had to struggle to get the picture made, showing that even Oscar-winning veterans sometimes don't get the respect they deserve in Hollywood.

Warner Bros., where his production company has long been based, initially rejected the concept. Eastwood and his producing partners then took it to some other studios, including Universal Pictures and New Line, which also lacked enthusiasm.

Eventually, Eastwood brought the film back to Warner, which agreed to come on board only if it split the $30-million budget equally with independent producer Lakeshore Entertainment. It was supposed to be released this March but the distributors decided to release it last December to make it eligible for the Oscars.

Eastwood, 74, who became the oldest man to win a best director's Oscar, said he was disappointed for Scorsese. "I kind of was a little bit disappointed when they started building a competition between Marty and myself because I have the utmost respect for him."

Eastwood also thought his last big Oscar contender, "Mystic River," should have won the Academy Award for best picture last year but got "hobbitized"—a reference to runaway Oscar triumph of "The Lord of Rings: The Return of the King."

Thank you, Mom

Hollywood's tough guy thanked his mother, who accompanied him to the 77th annual Academy Awards on Sunday.

"So at 96, I'm thanking her for her genes," Eastwood joked.

"I'm just lucky to be here, lucky to be still working and I watched (honorary Oscar winner) Sidney Lumet out there who's 80 and I figure, I'm just a kid. I've got a lot of stuff to do yet," he added.

Boxing serves as a backdrop for the exploration of complex themes like religion, money and euthanasia in the poignant film, which won four of the seven Oscars for which it was nominated.

In accepting his award for best director, Eastwood said making "Million Dollar Baby" was a "wonderful adventure."

"To make a picture in 37 days, it takes a well-oiled machine," he added.

Eastwood's Oscar tally now totals four. He won two Academy Awards for directing and producing the 1992 western, "Unforgiven." He was honored in 1994 with a lifetime achievement award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which gives out the Oscars.

Eastwood was also nominated for best actor but lost out to Foxx. He also produced "Million Dollar Baby," and composed the music for it.

Emotional

The night's most emotional moment belonged to Foxx, 37, when he talked about the grandmother who raised him. Tears welled in his eyes when he said she was his first acting teacher.

She taught him to "stand up straight, put your shoulders straight, and act like you've got some sense," he said.

Spain's "The Sea Inside" ("Mar Adentro") was named best foreign language film for its tale of a paralyzed man, portrayed by Javier Bardem, who fights his country's legal system for the right to take his own life.

The Oscar triumphs by black actors Foxx and Freeman at Sunday's Academy Awards indicate that Hollywood's decades-old race barrier could finally be crumbling.

Double honors

Only once before have two black actors walked off with Oscar statuettes in the same year—in 2002, when Halle Berry became the first black woman to win best actress and Denzel Washington won best actor.

This year's double honors came in a year where a record number of five acting nominations went to black performers, including two to Foxx, who also won a best supporting actor nod for his role in the thriller "Collateral."

This year's two other black nominees, Don Cheadle, nominated as best actor for the genocide drama "Hotel Rwanda," and his co-star, best supporting actress nominee Sophie Okonedo of Britain, went home empty handed.

Foxx and Freeman's wins on Sunday bring to 10 the total number of black actors who have won cinema's top awards.

For years, black actors were overlooked by Hollywood awards juries and relegated to more minor or comedic roles.

All that color

In the lingo of the moment, black comedian Chris Rock scored big hosting Sunday's Oscarcast with his charm offensive.

Rock pulled no punches when asked how he felt about all the "color" in Hollywood's Kodak Theater on Sunday.

"It's always good to see some color in the room that don't have mops," he said.

Rock did nothing to rile the Federal Communications Commission, as some had feared or hoped. Nor, as some had feared or hoped, did he relegate the Oscars themselves to supporting-player status. What he did do was give the 77th Academy Awards a needed pick-me-up, presiding over the broadcast with saucy finesse.

In its never-ending quest to shake off its accumulated cobwebs, the Oscarcast had taken an unusually bold step in hiring him. It seemed to acknowledge that, for many viewers, there was more suspense in seeing what the irrepressible comedian might say or do than in finding out who would claim this year's crop of trophies.

Thanks to the movies

Rock's opening monologue wasn't a home run, but he warmed up quickly.

He needled nearly every actor within earshot by observing, "There's only four real stars, and the rest are just popular people. Clint Eastwood is a star. Tobey Maguire's just a boy in tights."

"Next year, they're gonna give the Oscars in the parking lot," quipped Rock, who also took to voicing puckish introductions for some of the presenters. "Comedy superstar Jeremy Irons"? And what about dishy Penelope Cruz and Salma Hayek, brought on by Rock with the crack, "You won't be able to take your eyes off these next four presenters."

It was a night when Prince was a presenter and the cellist Yo-Yo Ma performed.

A warm tribute to the late Johnny Carson treated viewers to clips from his many years in a role much of the audience had forgotten he once had: hosting the Oscars.

Accepting his lifetime achievement award, director Sidney Lumet offered one of the most all-inclusive (and gracious) thank-yous in Oscar history: "I guess I'd like to thank the movies." *INQUIRER wires*

Filipino . . .

From page A1

one might add, Filipinos do it (and how they do it! Think 85 million Pinoys) but a recent survey found that quite a number of them did not know what "doing it" led to.

Exactly a week into the government's Ligtas-Buntis campaign, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said couples with no notion of family planning lacked even the "very basic" knowledge of how children were conceived.

"They don't know how pregnancy happens. Many don't even understand that they have a uterus ... [It's] incredulous but it's true," said Dayrit at a media briefing yesterday.

A recent survey by Social Weather Stations found that only 30 percent of all Filipino couples practiced any form of family planning, either through artificial or natural means.

Of the 70 percent that did not use any method, the DOH said 30 to 40 percent practiced family planning at one point but had stopped, while the remaining 30 percent had "no notion" at all or were considered "ignorant" of family planning.

Missed conception

Some of those who were ignorant did not know how conception took place, while some women even thought that their menstrual discharge came from the blood that flowed through their veins instead of as a result of the shredding of the uterine wall, Dayrit said.

"So you can just imagine why very few people practice family planning," he said.

Dayrit blamed their ignorance of sexual health and functions on the lack of education among Filipinos, especially the poor who tend to drop out of school and get pregnant early.

He said the values system in the country also contributed to the low level of education on sex and fertility among couples.

The Catholic Church in the Philippines opposes the use of artificial methods of family planning and even reminded the health workers involved in the Ligtas-Buntis campaign of their "right to conscientious objection."

"What we're doing is [trying to] create a healthy supportive environment where people can talk about sex, fertility ... because it is not happening; a lot of it is cultural," Dayrit said.

Value judgment

"Knowledge is often tempered by values, and if their values are such that they reject knowledge, there's nothing we can about it. We're doing this (Ligtas-Buntis campaign) in the hope that, eventually, they can prevent pregnancies if they wish," he said.

Health workers in Central Luzon and Bicol had talked to around 1,500 couples the past week, according to initial field reports.

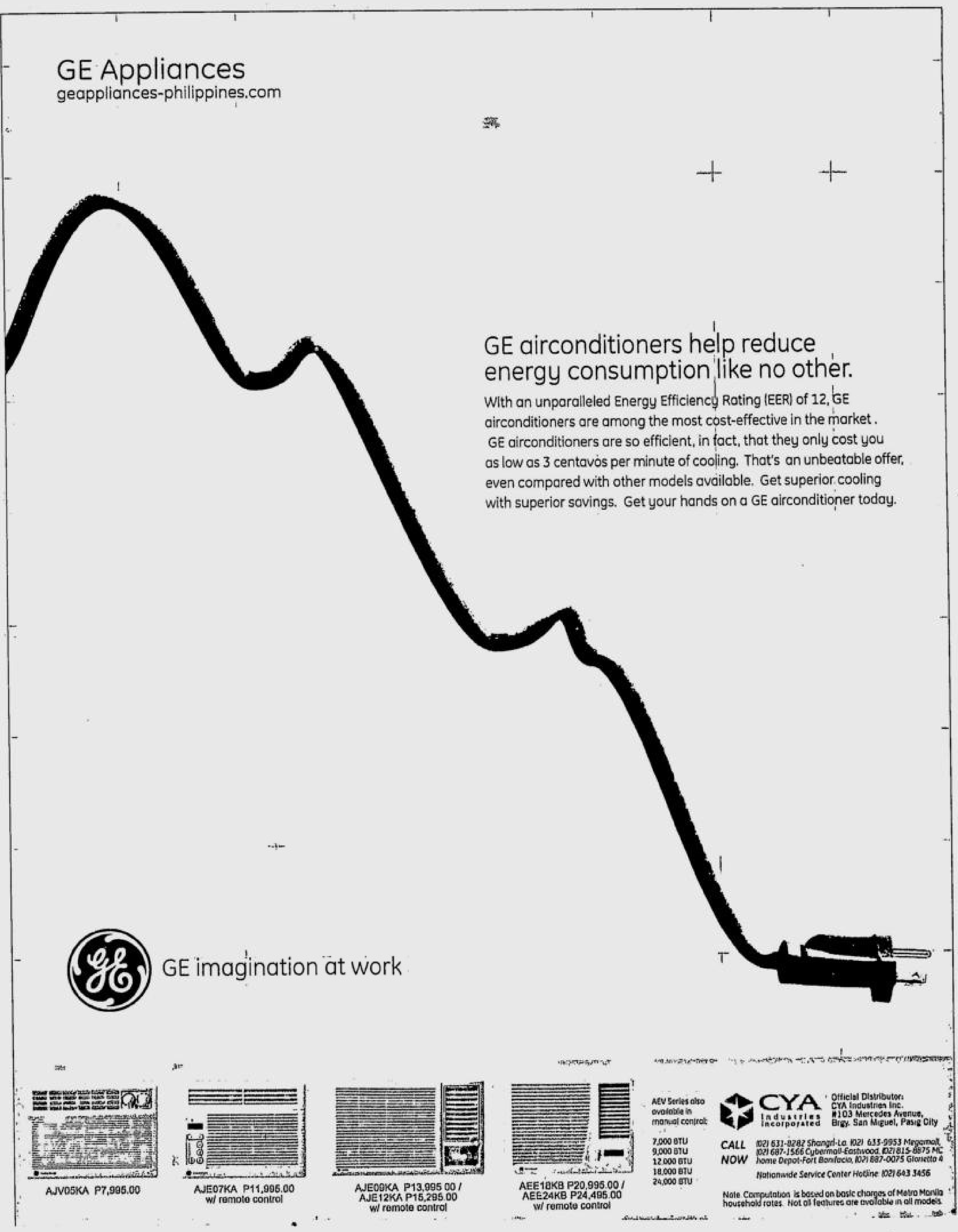
Dayrit expressed confidence the national and local governments would be able to reach the two-million target couples who are said to have an unmet need for family planning.

In the meantime, to continue to quote Porter:

"In Spain, the best upper sets do it, Lithuanians and Letts do it; the Dutch in old Amsterdam do it, not to mention the Finns; Folks in Siam do it, think of Siamese twins.

"Some Argentines without means do it, people say in Boston even beans do it. Let's do it, let's fall in love."

Tra-la-la.



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House OKs lifting of VAT exemptions

From page A1

passed this March because it will send a signal to our people and to investors that we're in control of our own future."

She noted that 2003 was the last time Congress managed to pass a national budget bill. In 2004, it reenacted the budget of the previous year.

As senators and members of the House swapped blame for the impasse on the proposed P907.6-billion national budget and the 12-percent VAT, the President issued a warning.

"Those who oppose the national budget and the VAT will set this nation back and put us on a collision course with fiscal and economic responsibility. They will hold this nation hostage to a future devoid of hope by putting petty politics ahead of the national good," she said.

The President said that "if we don't make the tough choices today, there will be no choices for us tomorrow."

The higher VAT rate is the most important of the eight revenue measures, which are expected to raise P80 billion in revenues a year, that Ms Arroyo asked the House of Representatives to pass last year. The higher VAT rate is expected to raise P35 billion a year.

So far, Congress has passed a law raising the excise taxes on tobacco and liquor products, and one that would set performance targets on revenue collectors who could be fired for failing to meet them.

The ways and means committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives favor the lifting of the VAT exemptions of independent power producers (IPP) and professionals like doctors and lawyers.

At least 28 opposition members of the House would withdraw their support for a bill lifting the VAT exemptions of certain goods and services despite a provision prohibiting companies from passing on the tax to consumers, Minority Leader Francis Escudero said yesterday.

No pass-on provision

At a press conference, Escudero said his group had been told that the Department of Finance was against the "no pass-on" provision and that it wanted the majority to strike this down.

Escudero said the DOF had also recommended to Ms Arroyo that she veto the bill if it contained this provision once the bill had been approved by both chambers of Congress.

He did not name the congressmen who agreed to reject the bill, but said they would vote as a bloc.

Last week, Escudero's group said it was supporting the bill after the majority agreed to insert the "no pass-on" provision, an initiative of the opposition.

But Escudero said the DOF position and the lack of interest among majority members to implement the prohibition were sending mixed signals to opposition members.

"This early, there is no sincerity on the part of the administration to accommodate us by adopting the no pass-on provision. The biggest sin would be to approve the bill only to be vetoed by the President," he said.

Fantasy

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño said the debate on the "pass-on" prohibition as contained in House Bill No. 3705 was "a fantasy of telenovela proportions."

Casiño cited three reasons the prohibition would not work:

- It is in the nature of the VAT that taxes are passed on through the entire VAT chain.
- The oil and power generation industries are deregulated.
- Most IPP contracts contain provisions that insulate the IPPs from any change in the tax regime.

Also, the IPPs and oil companies can cite other justifications for raising their prices, such as higher costs of operating expenses or raw material importation," Casiño said.

As currently worded, the bill was "toothless" even if it contained a no pass-on provision, he said.

"Like the much-hyped sardines-and-noodles exemption, it is meant to embellish and merely facilitate the approval of the bill, at least in this chamber," Casiño said.

He said a separate clause in the bill should state that all provisions in contracts that were contrary to the implementation of the law be declared null and void.

He pointed to a provision in the onerous contracts between the IPPs and National Power Corp. which required the state-owned power firm to shoulder all VAT payments imposed on the IPPs.

Resurrected tax on text

In its zeal to raise revenues by maximizing VAT payments, the Senate has wittingly or unwittingly adopted an anti-investment provision that penalizes corporations, including telecommunication giants, that spend to upgrade their equipment or expand their capacity, according to Albay Rep. Joey Salceda.

"The Senate has surreptitiously resurrected the tax on text through the spread-out crediting of input VAT on capital equipment but with a more pervasive application on all industries. It's greatest impact is on cellular firms," said Salceda, an adviser to the President on economic matters.

In a draft bill on VAT reforms, the Senate ways and means committee has proposed that corporations get their refunds on the VAT paid on capital goods in equal parts over five years rather than getting the full amount in one year.

By spreading the claim for input tax on capital goods over five years, Salceda said the measure could raise P23.08 billion in revenues. "Unfortunately, it would penalize instead of reward firms that invest," Salceda said.

He described the provision as "simply a bad tax policy" because it would create "an unfair situation in which two firms might have the same sales but the one that invests more pays more taxes."

Cancel debt payments

While Malacañang and Congress focus on new tax measures to shore up the country's finances, three Catholic bishops want the country's foreign debt payments cancelled.

Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen, Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez and Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias yesterday joined the assembly of the Philippine Congress for Alternative Democracy (PCAD) and called for the repudiation of unjust debts.

"Is it moral for a government to ask the poor to pay for loans that failed to result in their benefit?" Iñiguez said in his address before the group's assembly at the University of the Philippines.

Labayen, Iñiguez and Tobias mentioned a statement on debt service that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued in September 1990.

The CBCP document said debt payments must not result in the "asphyxiation" of the country in terms of the need for social services and development.

"That is a good thought," Iñiguez said of the suggestion that Ms Arroyo, reputedly a devout Catholic, be informed of the existence of the CBCP statement.

With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and AFP

Palace seeks tax hike on used vehicle imports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG is planning to raise by up to 100 percent the duty on used vehicle imports if the Supreme Court stops it from banning their entry into the country.

"The next move is to file a motion for reconsideration. If in the end, if we lose the motion for reconsideration, I will simply raise tariffs because I have the power to do that," President Macapagal-Arroyo said after the groundbreaking for a motorcycle manufacturing plant in Batangas.

Ms Arroyo is allowed by law to raise duties by up to 100 percent to protect a domestic industry. A used imported vehicle pays the same tariff as a new vehicle—5 percent for those imported from members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and 15 percent to 30 percent from non-Asean sources.

The Court of Appeals had ruled that the President had no authority to prohibit the importation of used motor vehicles as indicated in Executive Order No. 156, which she signed in December 2002.

EO 156 banned all imports of used motor vehicles, especially in the Subic Bay Freeport zone, except for units brought in by *balikbayans* and diplomats and for special purpose vehicles such as ambulances and fire trucks.

The CA ruling was a major blow to the President's bid to stop the influx of used vehicles, particularly from Japan, that had become a source of embarrassment for her administration.

115 dead, 148 hurt . . .

From page A1

US troops out of Iraq and wreck the country's transition to democracy, have often targeted people looking for state jobs.

They frequently target police and army recruits but have also killed local government workers.

Associated Press Television News footage showed small lakes of blood outside a medical clinic, located on a dusty street.

Scorch marks infused with blood covered the clinic walls and dozens of people gathered at the scene helped put body parts, including arms, feet and limbs into blankets.

Shoes and tattered clothes were piled up in a corner.

Car came ... boom!

"People were queuing up to be checked medically in order to become policemen. A car came ... and exploded," Ammar Mosa, a witness, told APTN.

Dia Mohammed, the director of Hilla General hospital, said most of the victims were recruits waiting to take physicals as part of the application process to join the Iraqi police and national guard.

"We've called on people to donate blood and have opened a center for that," Dr. Mahmoud Abdul Ridah, an official in the local health authority said. "We've called on doctors from Kerbala, Diwaniyah and Najaf to come and help and they have started to arrive."

The toll made the blast the single deadliest attack since the fall of Saddam in April 2003 and made Monday one of the bloodiest days of the two-year insurgency.

The worst day was in March last year, when more than 170 people were killed in a series of suicide bombings in Baghdad and the holy city of Kerbala, just west of Hilla.

US help still needed

Monday's attack came as Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi acknowledged Iraq's security forces were still unable to take on the insurgency without the help of US-led troops.

"Iraqis should be able to start taking over more and more security responsibilities very soon," he wrote in the Wall Street Journal. "But we will continue to need and to seek assistance for some time to come."

Elsewhere in Iraq, a hospital official said one civilian was killed and two were wounded when insurgents fought with Iraqi troops in the town of Baquba, northeast of Baghdad.

Two policemen were killed in the capital, one by a gunman and one by a roadside bomb, police sources and witnesses said.

The US military said gunmen killed four people and wounded two in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Sunday. A bombing near the town, also on Sunday, killed eight people.

The military also said a US soldier was shot and killed in Baghdad while manning a traffic checkpoint.

The death raised to 1,137 the number of US troops killed in action in Iraq since the March 2003 war.

Allawi's government and its American backers insisted the insurgency was being defeated and had announced a series of high-profile arrests in recent weeks to support their claim.

Saddam's brother

The government was expected to give details later on Monday on the capture of Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan al-Tikriti, a top-level Baathist accused of directing the Iraqi insurgency from Syria.

A senior government official told Reuters that Syria, under pressure due to accusations it was behind recent attacks in Israel and Lebanon, had played a role in giving Ibrahim up.

Syria had come under fire from the United States after the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri in Beirut nearly two weeks ago. The Lebanese opposition blamed Damascus for his death.

Iraq's US-backed government had repeatedly accused Syria of abetting militants, charges Damascus denied.

Iraqis welcomed the news of al-Hassan's capture.

No. 36 in deck of cards

"I hope all the terrorists will be arrested soon and we can live in peace," said Safiya Nasser Sood, a 54-year-old Baghdad housewife.

Al-Hassan was No. 36—the six of diamonds—on the list of 55 most-wanted Iraqis compiled by US authorities after Saddam was toppled.

Eleven from the deck of cards issued to help troops identify the suspects remained at large. The United States had offered $1 million for his capture.

Under Saddam, al-Hassan led the dreaded General Security Directorate and was accused of the widespread torture of political opponents. *Reuters, AP*

Pope's condition sparks Vatican power struggle

From page A1

leader of more than one billion people—are sequestered during the deliberations, with only a doctor and a cook at their disposal. The electors vote by secret ballot.

But such rules do little to quiet the buzz over potential candidates for the papacy—known as "papabili" in Italian—and how rivalries for top Vatican posts in the next administration influence the popemakers.

'Irresponsible'

Chicago Archbishop Francis George went so far as to say Sunday that it would be "irresponsible" not to think about a successor to John Paul II.

"As his health weakens, naturally it would be irresponsible not to think about that, at least in your own heart and in your own prayers," George told Fox News.

Understandably, Vatican insiders speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

"After John Paul II, the tendency will be to elect an Italian, given centuries of tradition, and that this nationality doesn't upset anyone, which wouldn't be the case with an American, a German or a Frenchman," one Vatican insider said.

The vast majority of the Roman Catholic Church's 263 Popes have been Italian, and John Paul II was the first non-Italian to be elected in four and a half centuries.

"I don't think the college of electors will risk electing a foreigner. The Italians are the inner circle. They really know how the Curia works," said another source, referring to the Church government.

Of the 119 electors, 58 are European, of whom 20 are Italian.

The emergence in 1978 of then Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as a compromise candidate was the result of a split between two Italian candidates, Florence Archbishop Giovanni Benelli and his counterpart from Genoa, Giuseppe Siri.

The popemaker then—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany—is a leading outsider in the running today at age 77. Now he is once again thought to have the most influence on the eventual choice.

Front runner

Most Vatican watchers agree that the front runner is Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi, archbishop of Milan, the biggest diocese in Europe.

The 70-year-old prelate is favored "because he is both a pastor, an intellectual and because as someone close to John Paul II he represents continuity, but with new ideas," one insider said.

The man wielding the most power at the moment is the Vatican's No. 2 official—Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano who, like Ratzinger, is 77.

However, Sodano's chances to succeed the Pope are thought to have been compromised by his very closeness to the Pontiff in an increasingly centralized papacy.

Experts say that in the end, behind-the-scenes alliances will decide the outcome. Tettamanzi can count on the support of two powerful Italians in the college of electors—Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, who heads the bishops congregation, and Camillo Ruini, the head of the Italian Church.

The other Italian "papabile" is Venice patriarch Angelo Scola, 63, who, like Tettamanzi, is considered a moderate.

Scola will have the backing of Opus Dei, a powerful group that was elevated to the status of a personal prelature of the Catholic Church by John Paul II.

The group has a cardinal elector, Spaniard Julian Herranz, who is believed to have several Latin American and European supporters among the electors. *AFP*

DENR pushes limited logging operations

From page A1

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

Under this "new policy direction," logging will be banned in the rest of the country except in the select regions and in privately owned tree plantations, Defensor said at a press conference yesterday.

He unveiled the proposal amid renewed debates on whether the country should impose a total log ban following last November's floods and landslides that killed hundreds of people, mostly in Aurora and Quezon provinces in Luzon. The landslides were blamed on logging in the Sierra Madre.

A total log ban has actually been in effect since last Dec. 8 when Malacañang suspended logging activities nationwide in the wake of the calamity. The suspension has sent prices of raw wood products up and has begun to hurt wood-based companies, particularly those making furniture.

Local wood requirements

Citing an Asian Development Bank study, Defensor said the country would only need about 1.5 million to 2.3 million hectares of forest lands "to sustain the local wood requirements of the country" pegged at around 3 million cubic meters a year.

It is, therefore, viable to just "confine production forests only to two to three regions and ban logging in all the (other) 13 to 14 other regions," he said.

His announcement is expected to send shock waves through various holders of Ifmas (Integrated Forest Management Agreements) and other types of timber licenses, who are allowed to grow and harvest trees on public lands under state regulation.

This is because the scheme will entail the cancellation "without cause" of timber licenses and permits in the regions covered by the ban. Defensor assured the affected holders that they would be "compensated" by the government.

Eco-tourism

The "log ban regions" will instead be promoted by the DENR as investment sites for eco-tourism, fruit orchards and other agro-forestry ventures that are not timber-producing, he said.

DENR records showed there were around 200 Ifma holders but only eight of them remained "operational" outside the two regions where logging would be allowed.

"And I don't believe we need 200 Ifmas," Defensor said, "because their (permits) serve as the key for illegal operations to be legal. So we have to cancel some of them."

Defensor said Caraga and Davao were initially picked because they were the country's biggest wood-producing regions. A third region is being considered.

He explained that a "limited log ban" was favored by the DENR over three other forest management strategies.

3 options

Option No. 1 calls for a total log ban. There will be no harvesting of trees whatsoever in both natural and plantation forests. This means that the country will import all its wood requirements and the government will cancel all Ifmas and other timber growing arrangements, according to Defensor.

The first option will require the government to compensate all existing forest investments made by the private sector to the tune of P10 billion. In addition, it will relocate about half a million families from restricted forest zones.

The DENR will also have to increase its budget and manpower to beef up security around those forest lands, Defensor said. Today, the agency merely spends "P4 per hectare" to guard protected areas.

Under Option No. 2, the log ban will only apply to the country's remaining natural forests.

"The problem with this option is that it's now hard to determine which trees were part of the natural (growth) forest and which were already cultivated," he said.

Option No. 3 is the policy being followed at present. It follows the principle of "sustainable forest management" and delineates forest lands as protected areas and timber and nontimber areas.

The log ban is imposed based on the topography of the land, covering areas that have an elevation of 1,000 meters, have a "50-degree slope" and are within 20 meters from a body of water.

It is under this policy that the government encourages private investments in forestry, hence it grants Ifmas and other timber permits.

"Our direction is toward the fulfillment of Option No. 4," Defensor said, referring to the limited region-based log ban.

He said this preferred mode was decided upon following a two-month study by the DENR.

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'Naia not a lure for shabu'

By Nikko Dizon

THE PROXIMITY of the Multinational Village in Parañaque City to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) was no reason why the subdivision seemed to be a favorite location for alleged shabu factories.

"Ever since, there had been no shipment of equipment for illegal drugs in the airport. For one, it is very expensive to send cargo by air," said Angel Atutubo, Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) assistant general manager for security.

He was reacting to comments aired over radio by Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe, who said the nearness of the upscale village to Naia could be one of the reasons why most of the alleged shabu laboratories raided recently by police authorities were at Multinational.

Another drug laboratory was raided at the subdivision over the weekend, the second alleged factory discovered there in the last two weeks. A total of five alleged factories had been raided at Multinational Village since last year.

Atutubo, a retired military general, said traditionally, drug syndicates would ship their equipment by sea.

"The mayor has no basis in saying the subdivision's (nearness) to the airport could be a reason why several alleged shabu laboratories were discovered there," Atutubo said. He added that Naia was now using the latest X-ray machines, such as the CTX 9000 and EDS 5500, to detect illegal drugs and explosives.

Suspects in Vidamo slay nabbed

By Leila B. Salaverria

FOUR of six suspects in the killing of Public Attorney's Office lawyer Teresita Vidamo have been arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents in separate operations in Las Piñas City and Cavite last week.

Two of the suspects were particularly memorable to one of the witnesses because the pair threw litter in front his store while they were watching out for Vidamo at Casimiro Village in Las Piñas prior to the ambush.

Vidamo, the PAO chief in Las Piñas, was gunned down on Feb. 9 in front of her house at Casimiro Avenue, Casimiro Village.

The suspected gunmen were identified by the NBI as Jonathan Lara, an 18-year-old construction worker from Las Piñas, and Mark Anthony Cemanes, a 22-year-old laborer from Cavite.

Also nabbed were construction worker Exequiel Lara, 22, Jonathan's brother, who allegedly acted as lookout for the group. The fourth suspect, Arturo Sanchez, 34, was reportedly the one who got in touch with the group hired to kill Vidamo.

According to the NBI, Sanchez has an outstanding warrant for homicide, Exequiel for frustrated homicide, and Jonathan and Cemanes for theft.

All four were presented to the media yesterday by NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco, who refused to reveal the motive for the ambush and the mastermind, so as not to jeopardize subsequent operations.

The two other suspects, who remain at large, were identified as Sanchez's brother Ludogario and a John Doe.

Both Jonathan and Cemanes have also executed extra judicial statements detailing Sanchez's alleged participation in the killing, said Reynaldo Esmeralda, NBI Special Task Force chief who arrested the suspects together with agents of the bureau's National Capital Region office.

Sanchez has kept mum about who hired him and why. He had not paid any of his companions their share of the money for the killing, according to STF agents.

PAO chief Persida Rueda Acosta expressed gratitude to the bureau for their speedy action in solving the case.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had said earlier that the killing could be linked to a land dispute case Vidamo was handling.

NBI-S
BI-STF
ABC
ABC

SUSPECTS in the killing of Teresita Vidamo, Chief of the Public Attorney's Office of Las Piñas, were presented to the media yesterday by Assistant NBI Director Nestor Mantaring, NBI Director Reynaldo G. Wycoco (center), and Persida Rueda-Acosta, chief of the Public Attorney's Office. Behind them are the suspects (from left): Arturo Sanchez, Mark Anthony Cemanes, Exequiel Lara and Jonathan Lara. MITCH MAURICIO

Canteen dispute in court

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE PRIVATE concessionaire who had been barred by the Department of Education (DepEd) from operating a public school canteen has brought her case to court.

Michelle Pineda, private concessionaire of the disputed school canteen of the Lakandula High School in Tondo, Manila, is seeking the annulment of DepEd's cease and desist order.

Through her lawyer Rosario Galit, Pineda filed a petition for certiorari with a request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) and injunction before the Pasig Regional Trial Court last week. The petition asks the court to annul DepEd's order.

"Petitioner is begging for its appellate and corrective authority to issue a writ of certiorari against officials of [DepEd], who are somewhat hell-bent, so to speak, in unlawfully ejecting [Pineda] from leased premises," said the petition.

Pineda, of Executive Village, BF Homes, Parañaque City, asked the court to annul the decision of DepEd Undersecretary Jose Luis Martin Gascon declaring illegal the contract she signed with Lakandula's former school principal Alice Blas in August last year.

Gascon, in a resolution dated Feb. 11, said the canteen's privatization was not allowed under DepEd rules governing the operation of public school canteens.

DepEd's intervention was sought by Lakandula's school teachers, who used to operate the canteen. The teachers felt the privatization was a breach of their rights.

Apart from disallowing private management of the school canteen, the DepEd decision ordered that canteen operations be returned to the school's Home Economics (HE) department.

Gascon ruled that the canteen should be under HE management until the Lakandula teachers organized themselves formally into a cooperative.

METROBRIEFS

Prisoner of love

"IN THE name of love," she walked in to visit her detained lover at Camp Crame and practically turned herself in. Authorities hardly broke a sweat while arresting on Sunday Carolina Balbina alias Carol Velasquez, a key suspect in the abduction of Katrina Schoof and her boyfriend at a popular coffee shop in Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa on Jan. 11. "It's because of love, I love him so much!" she told surprised policemen at the Philippine National Police custodial center. Balbina, 35, even requested that she be detained at the same top-security facility to be with her alleged boyfriend, PO1 Alvin Velasquez, according to Director Avelino Razon Jr., National Capital Region Police Office chief. The policeman was detained there for his alleged involvement in the Schoof abduction. To see him, Balbina showed a bogus ID identifying herself as one Eliza Velasquez. But authorities had earlier been tipped off that she was on her way to Camp Crame. Balbina was arrested on the strength of a warrant issued by Las Piñas judge Raul Villanueva. Prior to her arrest, Balbina, a Cavite resident, had been hiding in her new house in Baguio City, police said.

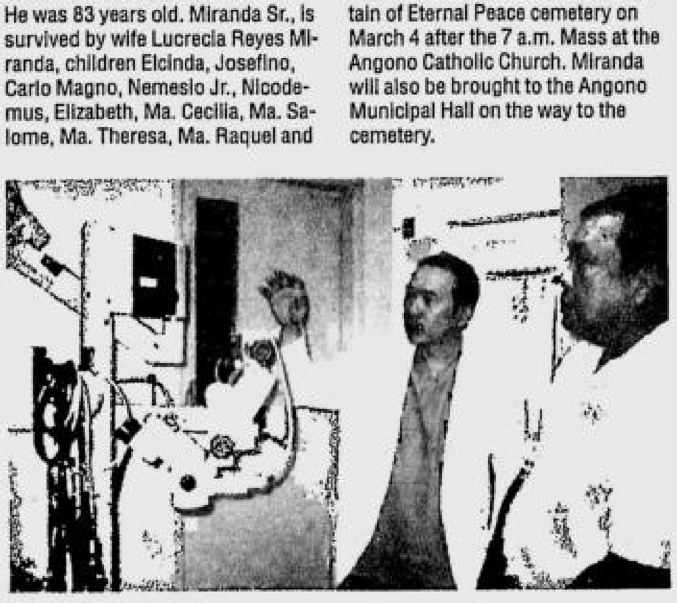
Christian V. Esguerra

Comedy for a cause opens at Malate bar

THE GRADUATING class of Mass Communication students (minor in broadcast journalism) of St. Scholastica's College Manila invites everyone to watch One Night Stand (Laughter for a Cause) on March 5, from 9 p.m. onwards, at the Toilet Humor Comedy Bar in Malate, Manila. The stand-up comedy show is for the benefit of World Vision Inc. For ticket inquiries, please contact Khristine at 823-5109/821-2370 or 0917-3775838.

Nemesio Miranda Sr.; 83

FORMER Angono Mayor (Officer-in-Charge) Nemesio Blancaflor Miranda Sr. passed away Friday, Feb. 25, at the Manila East Medical Center. He was 83 years old. Miranda Sr., is survived by wife Lucrecia Reyes Miranda, children Elcinda, Josefino, Carlo Magno, Nemesio Jr., Nicodemus, Elizabeth, Ma. Cecilia, Ma. Salome, Ma. Theresa, Ma. Raquel and their spouses, and their 27 grandchildren. Miranda's body lies in state at 300 Doña Aurora St., Angono, Rizal. He will be buried at the Mountain of Eternal Peace cemetery on March 4 after the 7 a.m. Mass at the Angono Catholic Church. Miranda will also be brought to the Angono Municipal Hall on the way to the cemetery.



Medical equipment for Mandaluyong

MANDALUYONG City Medical Center (MCMC) director Dr. Alfredo Lo shows Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali "Boyet" Gonzales (right) the new medical equipment donated by Rotary Club International District 6690 to the city hospital. Indigent patients were beneficiaries of the recent free medical mission organized by the Rotary District 6690. Twenty-five Filipino-American doctors and nurses from the United States offered free surgical operations to 156 patients in February.

Facelift for 7 major Metro roads

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TRAFFIC speed in the metropolis would change for the better with planned improvements on Metro Manila's seven main thoroughfares, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando said the traffic speed is expected to increase from 25 kilometers per hour (kph) to 35 kph at the end of the year.

"This project will decongest Metro Manila's roads and greatly improve vehicular flow," Fernando said.

The MMDA chair said that with a P4.3 billion budget from realigned foreign funds and a supplemental budget from the Office of the President, the MMDA and Department of Public Works and Highways would focus on the construction and improvement of the carriageways and sidewalks of R-10 Road in Tondo, MacArthur Highway, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon Avenue, Marcos Highway, C-5 Road and Edsa.

Fernando said they would also be building more footbridges, lighting facilities, loading and unloading zones, lane markings, signages and gantries in the major thoroughfares.

"Apart from the traffic speed, the greatest improvement will be on safety," Fernando said.

He explained that with additional infrastructures like footbridges and other necessary street improvements, there would be less road accidents in the metropolis.

Cainta claims victory in boundary row

By Luige A. del Puerto

WHO DID the Pasig court side with in its ruling on the boundary dispute between Cainta, Rizal, and Pasig City over the Sta. Lucia mall property?

Cainta Mayor Mon Ilagan insisted the court order to maintain the status quo clearly favored his town, not Pasig." The mall had been paying taxes to us. There is a writ of execution (against Cainta), but that has not been implemented yet, precisely because of the status quo order," he said.

Ilagan added that since the mall and its tenants had been paying taxes to Cainta, maintaining the status quo meant they would continue paying to Cainta.

The INQUIRER called several times but failed to reach Pasig Mayor Vicente "Enteng" Eusebio or the city's legal counsel for comment. A staff member said the mayor was in a convention, and was not available.

Last week, a grateful Ilagan said the order gave the town some leg room in its fight for control of the Sta. Lucia property.

Eusebio had said the city would abide by the lower court's status quo decision, but added he would not close an action center the city set up inside the mall.

GMA should countercheck battlefield reports

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo wants to endear herself to the soldiers in the battlefield, she should not order a ceasefire in Sulu.

Government troops already have the upperhand after being battered in the first few hours of the sneak attacks by Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels belonging to the so-called Misuari breakaway faction (or whatever they call themselves).

The government counter-attack should be relentless until the capture, dead or alive, of the Moro leader, Udtadz Habier Malik, or the surrender of a big number of rebels.

Army and Marine units that suffered the biggest number of dead and wounded during the sneak attack should lead in the mopping-up operations. That's the only way for these units to regain the pride they lost after suffering so many casualties.

* * *

During the war in the South in the 1970s, President Marcos did not endear himself to the troops when he would order them to withdraw even when they had some Moro rebels cornered.

The troops wanted to avenge the death of their comrades, but they were prevented from doing so on orders from Malacañang.

The troops were disheartened even more when they learned later that the rebel leaders they had cornered were given logging concessions and other privileges.

The result was that many government troops lost their fighting spirit. And when another order was given from upstairs to attack a rebel lair, the attacks were made half-heartedly.

* * *

Apart from sending Gen. Efren Abu, Armed Forces chief of staff, the President should have her own men assess the situation in the battlefield. Of course the "spies" should be among the fighting men.

The fighting men will be able to tell the President about morale of the men and the real score in the battlefield.

"Real score" means how many victories government troops have had since the counter-attack and how many civilians are suffering from the conflict.

Abu would, of course, give the President what she would want to hear. He is part of the President's military cordon sanitaire.

The President should countercheck situation reports in the Sulu through some of the men in the battlefield.

* * *

It seems the Department of Foreign Affairs is not interested in flushing out syndicates engaged in falsifying the identities of citizens in order to obtain passport.

I found this out when Grace Marable, 25, of Taytay, Rizal, came to me to complain that somebody else had assumed her identity and got a passport.

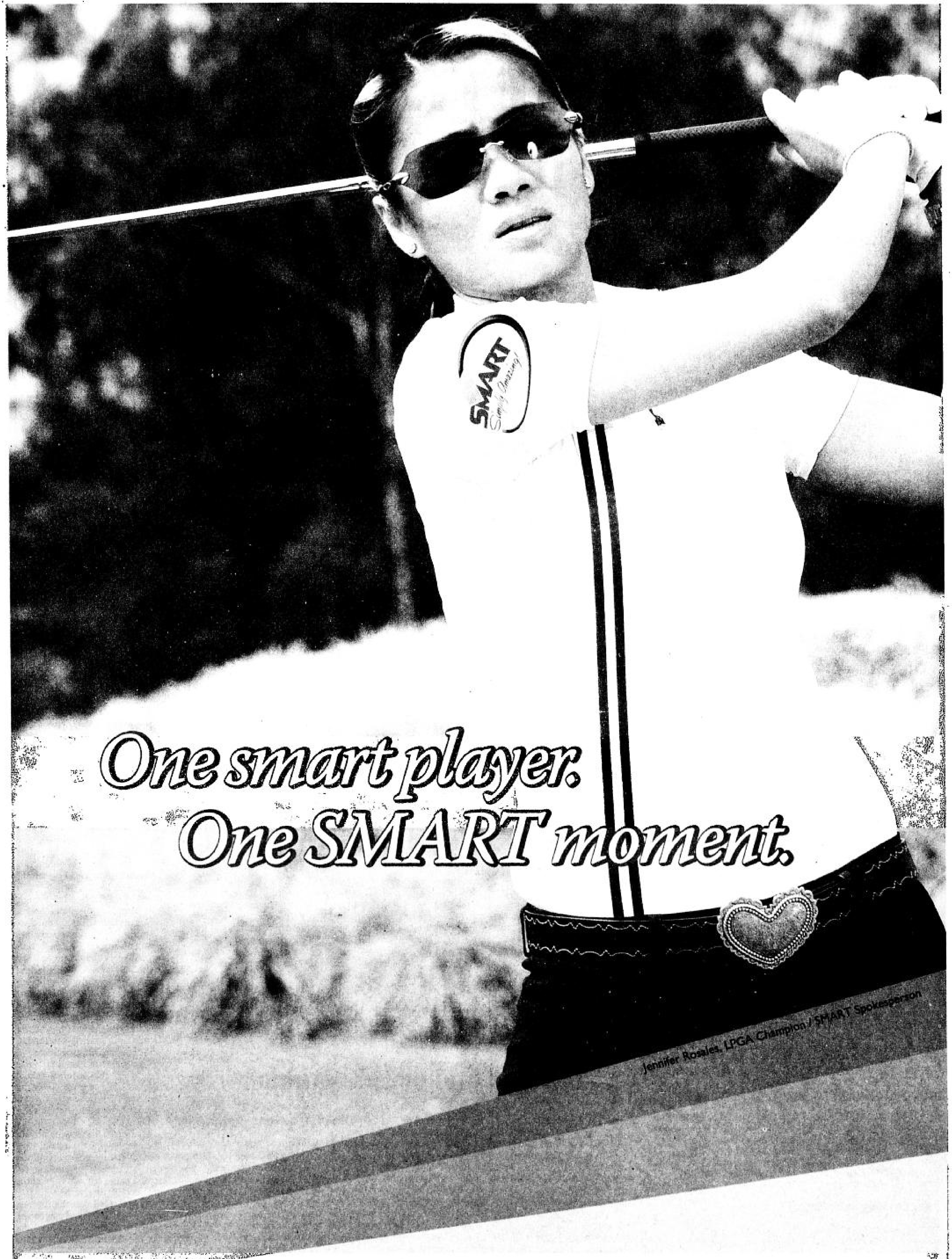
Marable went to the DFA to apply for a passport when the multinational company she works for gave her an all-expenses-paid trip to Hong Kong as an incentive.

The DFA passport division told her to wait three weeks for her to get her passport. The DFA said it would have to wait for the person who assumed her identity to come forward.

Marable learned that the poseur was a certain Mina Ang through the telephone number Ang in her passport application.

When Marable's father, Jaime, called up Ang's phone number, the person at the other end who said she was the mother-in-law, said Peak Star Promotion made her assume Grace's identity.

The DFA passport division said it was verifying papers Grace submitted to it.



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Jennifer Rosales, LPGA Champion / SMART Spokesperson

SMART joins the nation in congratulating Jennifer Rosales – 2005 SBS Open Champion.

Congratulations, Jennifer, on your second career win on the LPGA Tour. We at SMART are privileged to have you in our circle.

With a convincing two-stroke win over her celebrated rivals at the LPGA's 2005 SBS Open in Hawaii, USA, our very own Jennifer Rosales once again proved that the Filipino can excel in the world stage. Something we at SMART – proudly Filipino like Jennifer – have committed ourselves to ever since.

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SPORTS TV

GOLF: LPGA SBS Open, 1st round; 5:30 p.m.; ESPN—See J-Ro make waves in Hawaii.

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Pittsburgh vs Boston College; 8 a.m.; Oklahoma vs Texas; 10 a.m.; Providence vs Syracuse; 6 p.m. (r); ESPN - The college regular season winds down with crucial conference match-ups.

Compiled by L. Mangulat

SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Manny raring to do a Jenny for country

By Salven Lagumbay,
Contributor

JENNIFER Rosales did it, showing the world just what the Filipino athlete is capable of doing.

Now, Manny Pacquiao wants to do just the same.

The reigning Ring Magazine featherweight King said Rosales' recent victory at the SBS Open in the LPGA in Hawaii inspired him to work doubly hard in going after Erik "El Teribile" Morales' scalp in their March 19 face-off.

"*Gagawin ko lahat para manalo at ipakita* (I'll do everything to win and show) how great the Filipino can be," said Pacquiao via text message yesterday.

The flamboyant 26-year-old Rosales, the Filipino golfing wunderkind, put away amateur Michelle Wie's challenge and finished at 8-under-par 208 to capture the $1-million SBS Open by two strokes for her second career LPGA Tour victory in Kahuku, Hawaii.

Coincidentally, Pacquiao and Rosales were named Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year by the Philippine Sportswriters' Association last January.

As if to prove he is really inspired, Pacquiao stepped up his training last Saturday, sparred his first 12-rounder against different fighters at the Wild Card Gym.

The people's champ sparred with Jose Sta. Cruz, an unbeaten prospect from Oxnard, California, then traded leathers with Raymund Beltran and Justin Juuko.

"He is in superman form," according to trainer Buboy Fernandez.

This week, trainer Freddie Roach expects former Pacquiao foe Nedal Hussein and Mexican Orlando Salido to arrive and add variety to Pacquiao's sparmates.

The odds continue to favor Pacquiao, but they are expected to even up at fight night.

MANNY Pacquiao, inspired by Jennifer Rosales, spars with Jose Sta. Cruz (right) at the Wild Card gym in preparation for his bout against Erik Morales.
PHOTO COURTESY OF MANNYPACQUIAO.PH

PAL INTERCLUB

Tommy retires, gives Canlubang slot to son

By Musong R. Castillo

BACOLOD—Tommy Manotoc has decided to walk away from competitive play, promising, despite being at the top of his game at 55 years old, to dedicate the rest of his life toward helping the development of golf.

"It's silly for me to stay one more year," Manotoc said after convincing Canlubang skipper Luigi Yulo to give his spot to someone younger as the Sugar Barons gear up for the premier men's tournament of the Philippine Airlines Interclub.

"I'm an overstaying animal," Manotoc added. "Even if I know I can still play at a high level, my presence in the team does not do golf any good. Someone younger deserves my spot."

That someone younger turned out to be his son Matthew, who will fill an awfully big pair of shoes for the Sugar Barons when men's action starts tomorrow, the first step in Tommy's long-term vision of helping the game.

"He's got the game, though there are some rough edges that need polishing," Tommy said of his 16-year-old son. "This is what I am talking about, when Matthew leaves (for the US next year for college) another one will take his spot."

Tommy put up the Philippine Amateur Golf Development Foundation last year, its first project being the recent National Caddies' Open he organized together with Ben Abalos, and businessmen Hermie Esguerra and Tony Arevalo.

The top three placers of the tournament are now under the care of the PAGDF in Calatagan and Tommy expects one, if not all three of them, to be seeing PAL Interclub action as early as next year.

"These people deserve the shot that I got, so why deny them that," said Manotoc, who will now confine his future stints to seniors play.

Manotoc, many times the low amateur in the Philippine Open, was a member of the Canlubang team that debuted and won the championship in the Interclub in 1977 in Cebu. He later on became one of the tournament's most prominent—and winningest—figures.

Tommy made his decision official a day after winning the senior individual title for the second straight year here on Sunday. He shot rounds of two-under 68 at the Binitin in Murcia town on Saturday before a three-over 73 at Marapara here.

"He's definitely a big loss," said Yulo. "We have no experience with Matthew, but Tommy will not recommend anybody who is not capable of performing."

The long-hitting Matthew was the low man for the Philippines in the Junior Putra Cup in Indonesia last August and the World Junior Qualifying in Malaysia a month ago.

Tommy's decision comes at a time when the Sugar Barons will be trying to regain the men's title from Del Monte.

MANOTOC: I'm an overstaying animal.
ROGER MARGALLO

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Celtics bring a little Eastern shine into valley of the Suns** /A28

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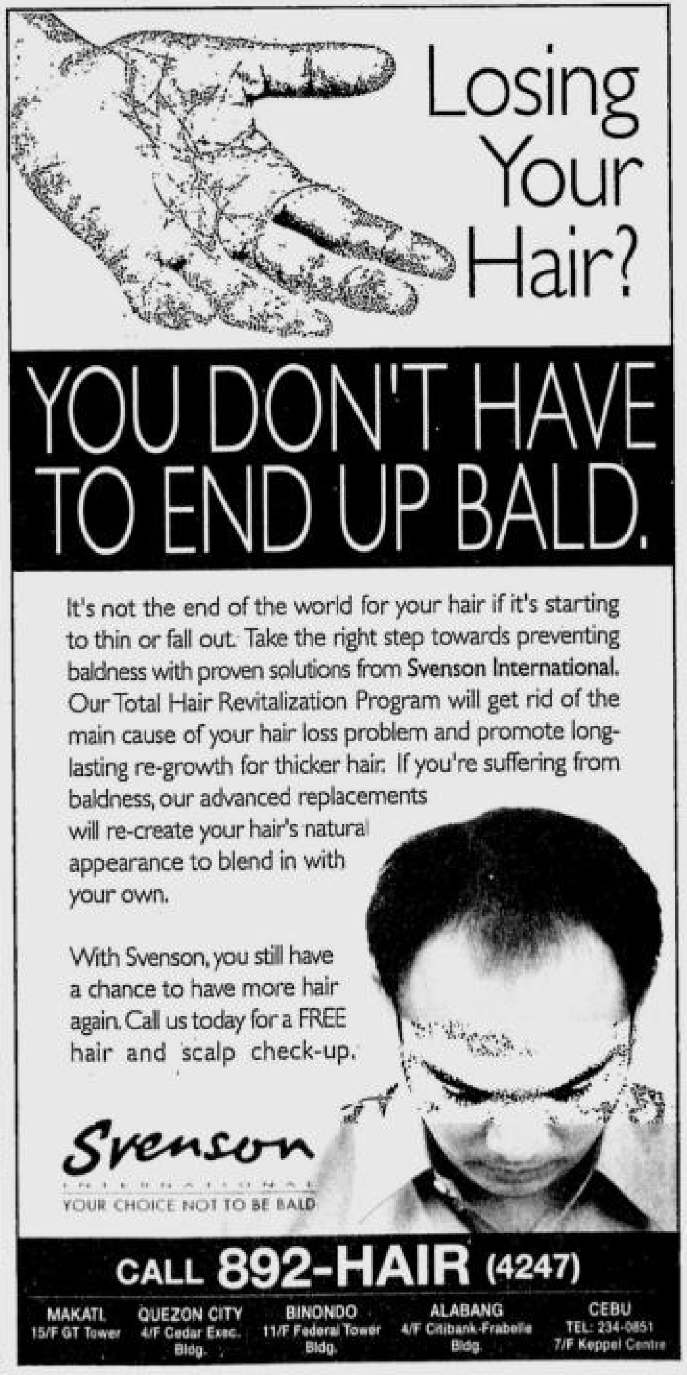

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MARCH 1 SAN ANTONIO SPURS vs. CLEVELAND CAVALIERS | 8:00 am
5 DETROIT PISTONS vs. PORTLAND BLAZERS | 11:00 am
6 LA LAKERS vs. BOSTON CELTICS | 8:30 am
7 INDIANA PACERS vs. DENVER NUGGETS | 9:00 am
8 CLEVELAND CAVALIERS vs. PHILADELPHIA 76ers | 9:00 am
9 DENVER NUGGETS vs. LA CLIPPERS | 8:30 am
CHICAGO BULLS vs. MILWAUKEE BUCKS | 12:00 nn
via satellite
NBA RADIO
SPURS vs CAVALIERS
8:00 AM LIVE on BLAZIN'

Laurente to defend light title

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

REIGNING Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation lightweight boss Dennis Laurente will leave for Japan tomorrow in time for his March 5 titular defense against Japanese Chikashi Inada at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo.

The southpaw Laurente will be accompanied by his manager, Johnny Elorde, trainer Mario Lumacad and Filipino boxing judge Edwin Sese, who will be one of the three judges tasked to pen the bout.

The 27-year-old Laurente, ranked WBC No. 6 lightweight, will be making the fourth defense of the OPBF title he won over Yosuke Otsuka in 2001 in Nagoya.

The March 5 bout will be an encore for Laurente and Inada, who battled to a majority draw last Oct. 2, allowing Laurente to retain his title, which he had previously defended over Indon Ferdinand (decision) and Fernando Montilla (draw).

Laurente goes into the fight with some 80 rounds of sparring against young fighters at the Elorde Gym in Sucat, Parañaque.

The 27-year-old Inada holds a 16-2 win-loss record with 12 KOs. His only defeats were dealt by Takehiro Shimada and Laurente.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Secret Angel 2. Silver Place 3. All Powerful 4. Daddy's Girl

Race 2--1. The Strategist 2. Real Material 3. Manileño 4. Misty

Race 3--1. Take Ten 2. Cool Reception 3. Secret Quest 4. Tochinic 5. Simply Gold

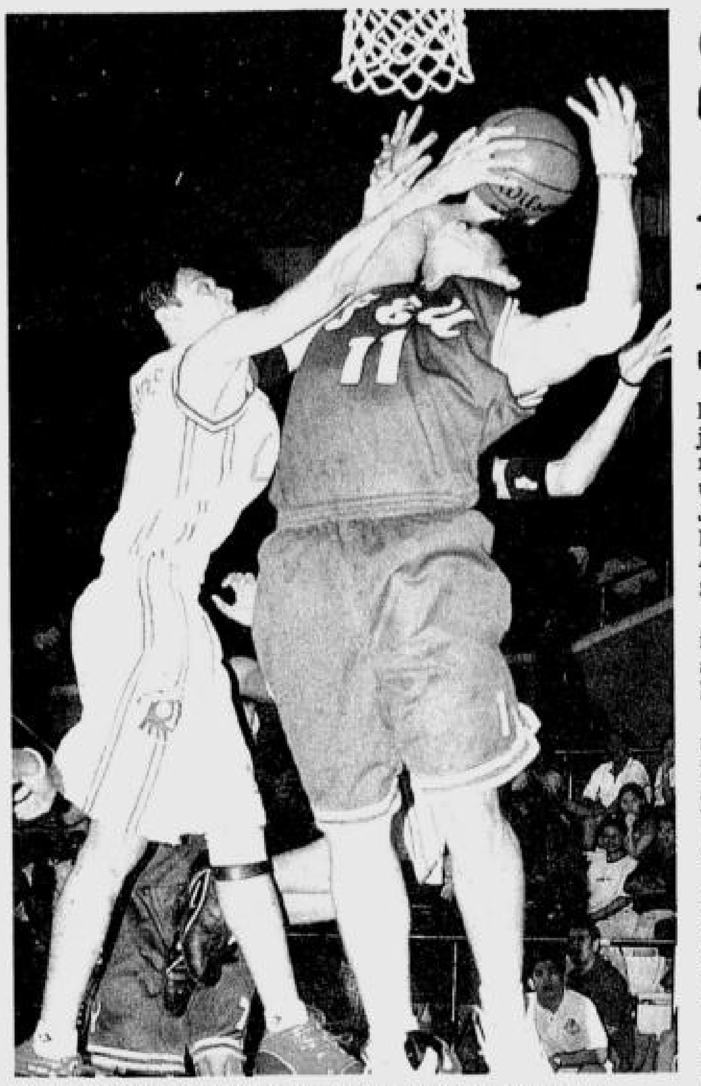
Race 4--1. Front Page 2. Andrei's Billiard 3. Something Silver 4. Collective Dreams

Race 5--1. Hello Happy 2. Idol 3. Sir Pierre 4. Security Star 5. Parrot Moe

Race 6--1. Boy from Brazil 2. Wild Orphan 3. Ancestral Home 4. Bold Lucky

Race 7--1. Shuttler 2. Mercurian 3. Magic Dancer 4. Powerhouse 5. Jayvie's Goldfather

Race 8--1. Perky Perp 2. Bunker Buster 3. Dynasty 4. My Lucky One 5. Burst of Speed 6. Aya's Star


LUIS Palaganas of UE battles for ball possession against Roser Mangahas of FEU during the Champion's Cup finals. FEU won the title.
JOSEPH AGCAOILI

SBC, Ateneo fives prevail

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DUMAGUETE CITY—San Beda College jump-started its grand slam bid in the juniors division with a resounding 90-58 triumph over University of Perpetual Help-Jonelta System yesterday even as Ateneo de Manila thrashed University of the East, 61-49, in the women's category of the National Students basketball championships here.

The victory put San Beda on top of Group C as it marched into the quarterfinals with Perpetual after two teams in their bunch backed out in the last minute.

The Lady Eagles, last year's runners-up and reigning NCR eliminations champs, made their intentions clear early in the game after posting an 18-9 first quarter margin which the Lady Warriors failed to overcome at the Silliman gym.

Pointguard Stephanie Villanueva hit a twinner to give Ateneo a 36-18 lead in the lopsided game which gave Ateneo coach John Flores plenty of chance to shuffle his formidable lineup. Ateneo is the title favorite here in the absence of defending champion Lyceum.

Philippine Youth team mainstays JR Taganas, Ogie Menor and James Martinez formed the backbone of the Red Cubs' systematic attack that left the Laguna-based Saints gasping for breath all game long, trailing by more than 30 points most of the game held at the Lamberto Macias gym.

Martinez topscored with 22 points, Menor added 13, while the burly 6-foot-3 Taganas chipped in 11 markers aside from throwing his weight around the shaded lane and igniting the Cubs' fiery fastbreaks with his one-handed outlet passes that the Bedans finished with flair.

Timberland High School of Butuan and University of Nueva Caceres of Naga City decided not to join the event giving San Beda and Perpetual—which happen to be two of the major contenders—quick rides to the next round.

"This gave us an advantage but we can't be too sure and we still have to give it our best," said SBC coach Ato Badolato, of his team which has won 12 juniors titles in this tournament and second straight including the previous editions held in Legazpi City and Lucena City.

Over at the Foundation University gym, Philippine Maritime Institute defeated University of Mindanao-Davao, 66-63, in the other women's game.

Janice de Guzman led PMI with 21, while Aileen de Jesus and Melveriza Quirante contributed 13 and 10 points, respectively.

Marlon Bariga banged in 26 points to bolster Salazar Institute of Technology High over Taytung High-Bacolod, 90-85, also at the FU gym. Kerby Cuizon and Jefferson Teves added 14 points each for SIT which notched its second straight victory.

BAP names Zamar coach for SEA Games

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Basketball Association of the Philippines yesterday named Boyzie Zamar as coach of the RP team that will try to extend the country's dominance of the sport in the Southeast Asian Games to be held in Manila and three other cities starting November.

The decision was made by the BAP national board after their meeting here, coinciding with the staging of the National Students Basketball Championships.

Zamar said that though he was humbled by the decision, he is aware of the magnitude of his job, considering that the country has not lost the SEAG cage crown since the 1989 Kuala Lumpur SEAG.

"I'm thankful for the confidence they have shown," said Zamar, who was himself a former University of the East standout and eventually became the Warriors' coach before guiding a number of RP teams in several international stints, including the 2002 KL edition of the SEA Games.

His appointment, though, raised some eyebrows because he was chosen over another national mentor, Dong Vergeire, who was supposed to be next in line after Aric Del Rosario, coach of the 2003 Vietnam SEAG squad, retired.

Zamar said he will intensify the training of the national team, which is presently composed of 16 members.

Among those included in the pool are Pep Moore of San Sebastian, BJ Manalo of La Salle, Christian Luanzon of University of Santo Tomas, Nino Canaleta of UE, Eder Saldua and Eman Samigue of University of Mindanao, JR Gerilla of University of Visayas, Noy Javier of Perpetual and veteran RP cagers Dennis Madrid, Egay Echavez, Ricky Calimag, Richard Melencio and Gerry Cavan.

Calimag, however, has been signed up by the Sta. Lucia Realtors in the PBA.

"The team is training continuously," said Zamar of the squad which will try to duplicate the easy victory of the 1991 team when the SEAG was last held in the country.

That 1991 team, which swept its games, was bannered by then rising superstars like Johnny Abarrientos, Jun Limpot, Victor Pablo and Vergel Meneses.

Marc Anthony Reyes

ZAMAR

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, March 1, 2005

TUESDAY
7:30 PM and 10:00 PM
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY
7:00 PM and 10:00 PM

American Idol
ABC iba tayo
SPECIAL SCHEDULE THIS WEEK!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Bida Si Mister Bida Si Misis			Insider
NBN		Taiwan Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Family Rosary Crusade		Paco Park Presents		Auto Focus	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho		Anime Ring Kasho		Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Crossing Jordan		John Doe		Newswatch Now	29th Street		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Linawin Natin		V League				Travel	IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	EZ Shop
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxsial	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC				The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace		One Tree Hill		The O.C.		Tonight Show With Jay Leno			
Cinema One																			
Studio 23	Bewitched	Survivor: Thailand	MYX Backtrax					Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Fightbox	The Amazing Race 6		Smallville		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Men's Room
AXN		Framed				Fear Factor		Samurai X	Samurai X	Andromeda (Season III)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Alias		The World's Sexiest Commercials		Train Wrecks	
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Wild Card		Manhunt		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Going To Extremes		Secret China		Nat'l Geographic Specials		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild	Wildlife Detectives	About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports		IBF Korea Open '05 MxdDbls		Swatch Fivb Finals Espino vs. Gstaad				GWS ep.6-2005	WTA '05 Volvo Women's Open SF1				NBA TV Daily	NBA GAme Sn Antonio @ Cleveland					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert							Back To Basics		
HBO			Love's Curse (3:45 PM)			Moto X Kids (5:15 PM)			Doc Hollywood (6:35 PM)				My House In Umbria			Six Feet Under 35. The Opening		Twister (10:50PM)	
Star Movies			Bull Durham			Rare Birds (6:15 PM)				Drumline				Apollo 13					Sleepless In Seattle
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename: Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang: The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		Eng. Premier League Highlights 04/05		2005 State Farm U.S. Figure Skating				Big East Conf.: Providence vs. Syracuse				Sportscenter Asia	Pool/Snooker Mosconi Cup '04		Big 12 Conf.: Oklahoma vs Texas				Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Unstalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Unstalkative Bunny				My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video		
Cinemax	Coyote Waits (2:45 PM)				Funny Girl					Hollywood Homicide				Into Thin Air: Death On Everest			Stealing Candy		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Trail To Hope Rose				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Just Cause		More Than Meets The Eye			Hustle (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilizations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
MTV Philippines			MTV Hanging Out		MTV Most Wanted		TRL		MTV Rising Star	MTV Diyos		Carmen & Dave	Room Raiders	High School Stories	I Want A Famous Face	MTV Lokal	Whatever Things	VH1 Video Collections	Bikini Destination
Sports Plus				Pac 10 Oregon St. @ Arizona National					Arena Football: Dallas vs Philadelphia						Italia Serie A				
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

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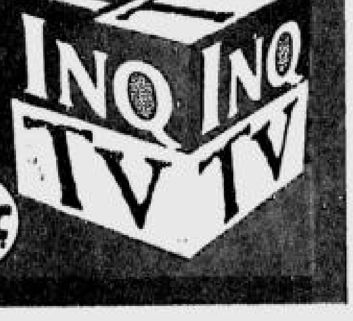

Canlubang, S'woods renew rivalry

THE BATTLE for supremacy between Canlubang and Manila Southwoods could spill from the ongoing PAL Interclub to the DHL-WWWExpress National Amateur Golf Championships when the 10th staging of the event begins March 8 at the north course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna.

Juvic Pagunsan spearheads the crack Cangolf squad, which will fight it out with the youthful Southwoods team in the PAL Interclub in Bacolod.

With defending champion and reigning national amateur titlist Jun Bernis, Jay Bayron, Boyet Sarazoga and former champion Abe Rosal in the fold, the hosts are expected to flash their familiarity with the par-72 layout throughout the four-day event.

But the Carmona-based golfers, led by former national amateur champion Artemio Murakami, are out to stamp their class in a bid to end their rivals' domination of the event sponsored by DHL World Express and WWWExpress.

Backing up Murakami are 2004 Singapore Amateur open champion Michael Bibat, veteran campaigners Jun Jun Plana and Hanson So Jr., and Tonton Asistio.

However, two talented players are raring to spoil the Canlubang-Southwoods projected showdown—Erwin Vinluan of Villamor and the power-hitting Marvin Dumandan of Riviera. Both are among the favorites in the event organized and conducted by National Golf Association of the Philippines in cooperation with Cangolf.

Also in the fold is the brother-sister tandem of jungolfers Wolen and Crystal Superal.

Meanwhile, registration is ongoing with deadline for listing set on March 5. Entry fee is pegged at P2,500 for men and P2,000 for ladies, inclusive of one practice round on March 7. For details, call NGAP at 5256987 or 5245160 or 521-1587 (fax) and at Cangolf (049) 5491363.

While the battle for the men's crown remains wide open, the same could not be said in the distaff side as reigning RP Ladies Open champion Jayvie Agojo looms as the overwhelming favorite to run away with her second straight crown owing to her superb form.

Agojo, 18, is coming off a big victory in the recent Southern Ladies Open where she beat former RP Ladies Open winner Carmellette Villaroman by seven shots. Agojo also won the Manila Ladies Cup at Wack Wack and spearheaded the country's 18th-place finish in last year's World Amateurs while placing joint 12th in the individual competition.

Others bidding to stop Agojo are national teammates Lora Roberto and Anya Tanpinco and club bet Lina de Guzman.

JUVIC Pagunsan remains to be the Canlubang spearhead.

Records galore in Pal Interclub

BACOLOD CITY—Suddenly, the PAL Interclub Golf Championship has manufactured records that will be hard to equal, if not surpass, in the years to come. And we are only talking here about the Seniors battle.

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

One, Luisita's sixth straight PAL Seniors victory on Sunday was a record. No team has achieved that feat since Seniors play was infused into the PAL Interclub 18 years ago. Add to this the fact that Luisita has now won 13 of the 19 Seniors titles staked since 1987.

Two, the three holes-in-one scored by Toto Bautista of Villamor (No. 10 of Bacolod Golf & Country Club), Butch Brodette of Manila Southwoods (No. 16 of Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club) and Romy Roxas of Team Alliance of Golfers of Northern California (No. 8 of BGCC) was a first in the PAL Interclub.

For their aces, Toto, Butch and Romy will each receive a free first-class ticket to any PAL destination in the US West Coast.

***

Carlo Gamban, King Sumulong, Alex Montelibano, Francis Gaston, Iggy Clavecilla, Bong de Guzman, Tommy Joson and Richie Garcia formed the nucleus of Team Luisita. They dedicated their victory to Rudy Samson, who was the captain when Luisita scored its fifth straight Seniors crown at about this same time last year in Cagayan de Oro. Rudy died of cancer last December.

"This victory is for Rudy," said Richie Garcia, pointing to a black patch pinned to his chest.

I don't think Luisita's twin feats—six straight titles and 13 crowns in 19 tournaments—will be equaled, even surpassed, in the near future.

***

I find it strange, if not funny, that 21 players have been disqualified in the just-ended PAL Seniors Interclub. Nineteen of them got sacked in Round 1, two in Round 2.

By disqualification, we mean their rounds for the day had been disqualified and they were allowed to play again the next day.

The reason for disqualification was they submitted their scorecards without the signature of their markers—a big no-no in golf.

My friend Eddie de Leon from Cebu was one of them and I surmise his friends from Cebu have not stopped ribbing him up to now.

It is generally accepted that many participants join the PAL Seniors Interclub mainly for fun and socializing. But it does not mean, however, that amid the socials and all, one should be so careless as to ignore the basic rules of the game.

I cited the 21 DQs if only to forewarn the participants in the Men's Regular of the PAL Interclub set March 2-5 here.

Rules first, socializing second, OK?

***

Even if I'm here in faraway Bacolod, I just can't brush aside the gargantuan efforts of Joseph Dumuk in boosting chess in his home province of La Union. Joseph will again be the tournament director when the La Union Open Chess Tournament is held March 7-12 in San Fernando City.

Joseph started the chessfest in 2002, with Emmanuel Senador winning it. Joey Antonio prevailed in 2003. Barlo Nadera won last year when no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo and Asia's first Grandmaster, Eugene Torre, made the ceremonial moves to open the tournament.

The chessfest is part of the twin celebrations of the founding of the Province of La Union (March 2, 1850) and the conversion of San Fernando from a municipality to a city (March 20, 1998).

Sponsored by the provincial government headed by Gov. Victor F. Ortega (hey, Gov, we shook hands at the LAX in Los Angeles last year, remember?) and the city government headed by Mayor Mary Jane C. Ortega, the event is sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, with Villa Estrella Resort owned by the Valero Group as the official hotel.

The champion will pocket P75,000 in the tournament that had GMs Torre and Bong Villamayor as participants in the event's first three editions.

I salute Governor Victor and Mayor Mary Jane for their robust support of chess in their respective turf as their teamwork has already produced budding greats like Chardine Cheradee Camacho of Caba and Loren Brigham Laceste of Sto. Tomas.

***

FASTBREAK. My round of golf with PAL top guns Henry So Uy (executive vice president), Jimmy Bautista (president), Domeng Duerme (PAL Interclub chair) and Rep. Nyoks Puentevella on Sunday at the NOGCC was worth my while it should perhaps merit one column here soon. At the outset, here's a glass to the four gentlemen of the golf course. Cheers!

Japanese netters edge UAAP stars

KOBE Gakuin University held off a game but visibly rusty University Athletic Association of the Philippines selection to win the first of a two-day Inter-College Tennis Dual Meet on Saturday at the PCA courts in Plaza Dilao, Paco.

Former national team member Camoy Palahang watched with mixed emotions as the visitors—his best players in the Japan Division II champion team—got tested by the UAAP lineup of former junior ace Roland Kraut in the opening day of this event sponsored by Prince.

"It's strange rooting for the players I'm coaching in Japan when they're up against my countrymen. But, of course, I also cheered for the locals because I see myself in them when I was still a member of the RP team," said Palahang.

Palahang, a contemporary of Felix Barrientos and Roland So in the golden years of RP tennis in the '80s, has been coaching Kobe Gakuin U for three years and, not forgetting his roots, came up with this concept of bringing Japan's Division II champions during their vacation in the Philippines for some action.

In the singles, Jordan Cimafranca of University of Santo Tomas survived Takashi Higashiguchi, 7-5, 6-3; OJ Sison of University of the Philippines beat Masaki Kawatsu, 6-3, 6-0, and Edu Diez of La Salle whipped Shohei Maruyama, 6-0, 6-1, for the UAAP selection.

But the Japanese scored in the other singles—Naoki Miyake over Pius Ocampo of UST, 6-1, 6-4; Fuyuki Ogawa over Gino Bautista of Ateneo, 6-2, 6-1; Shimpei Moriguchi over BJ sison of UP, 6-4, 6-4, and in the doubles—Ogawa-Miyake over McLean Barraquis-Pereme Alina of UST, 7-5, 6-4, and Moriguchi-Maruyama over Wilbur Orillano-Mark Temlique of Ateneo, 7-5, 6-3.

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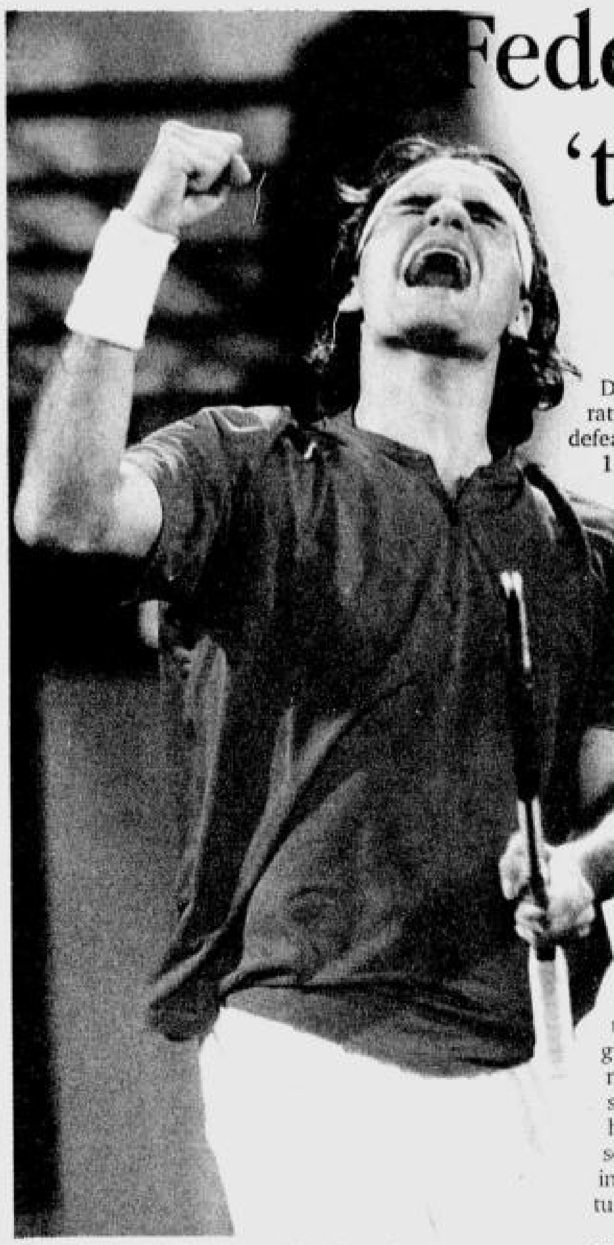
1st Runner-Up: Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan



ROGER Federer, who is usually calm and composed, flashes a rare show of emotion.

Federer scores Dubai 'three-peat,' keeps final streak intact

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Top-ranked Roger Federer defeated Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia, 6-1, 6-7 (6), 6-3, and won a third straight Dubai Open title on Sunday.

Federer extended his ATP record streak of finals wins to 16, including all three this year against Ljubicic. The Swiss star beat him in Doha last month, and in Rotterdam last weekend.

"I hope we can keep this rivalry going," said Federer. "It is good for Ivan, good to see a different face on the other side of the net."

The final was Ljubicic's fourth this year, and third in three weeks.

"I am getting really sick of this guy," Ljubicic joked. "But I guess he likes the same tournament as me, so I will have to keep seeing him. It is the first time I have done something like this. It seems I have to be careful choosing my tournaments in the future."

Federer improved his record to 20-1 this year. He's won 36 of his last 37 matches.

He fended off three break points in the third game, then broke Ljubicic in the fourth and sixth games for the first set.

"I felt like I had a grip this time," Ljubicic said, "but suddenly I felt like my racket was loose and the ball was flying a little bit too much. With Roger, you cannot afford to relax even for a second. I tried to concentrate in the beginning of the second just to regroup. I broke him back."

The Swiss made another great start to the second set, breaking an erratic Ljubicic in the opening game and racing to 3-1.

But the Croat hit a brilliant backhand winner past a charging Federer, and broke to level at 4-4.

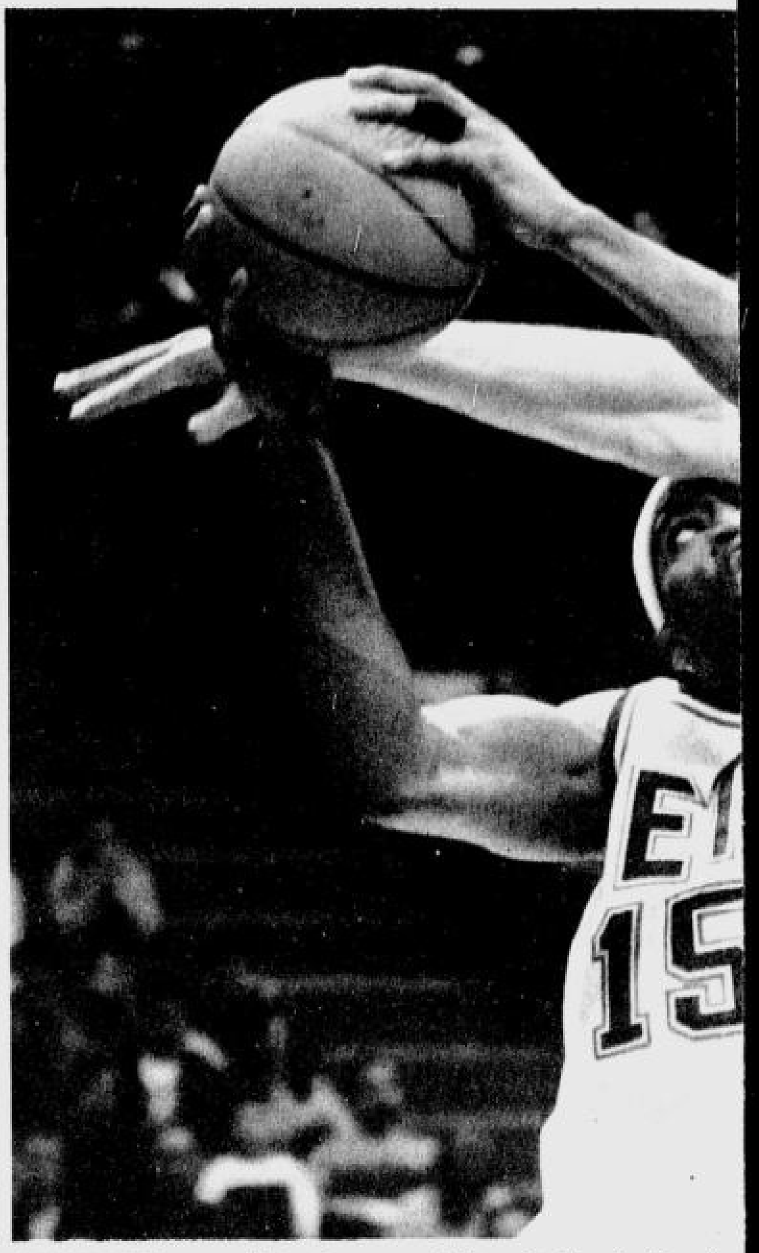
In the tiebreak, Federer had a match point at 6-5 but netted a forehand, and Ljubicic won it 8-6 with a deep return that Federer also netted.

Federer came back forcefully in the third set, breaking Ljubicic in the second game after the Croat was 40-0. But the Swiss double-faulted on break point in the next game to leave the match level.

Just when it seemed headed for another tiebreaker, Federer broke Ljubicic with a backhand winner after a long rally for 5-3, and served out the 2-hour, 16-minute match for his 25th career title.

"For me it is really positive to actually twice in two weeks have a chance to beat Roger," said the Croat. "It gives a big boost to my confidence and makes me believe that I belong up there with the best."

In the doubles final, Czechs Martin Damm and Stepanek Radek defeated the fourth-seeded pair of Swede Jonas Bjorkman and Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, 6-2, 6-4. *AP*



NEW JERSEY Nets guard Vince Carter gets clobbered by Cleveland Cavaliers

At 33, Arthurs finally gets first ATP triumph

ARTHURS: There's always a first. AP

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona—Unseeded Australian Wayne Arthurs became the oldest first-time winner since the ATP Tour was formed in 1990, beating third-seeded Mario Ancic of Croatia, 7-5, 6-3, in the Tennis Channel Open final on Sunday.

The 33-year-old left-hander, in his 128th ATP Tour-level tournament, dominated his 20-year-old opponent.

"It feels really, really good, really satisfying," Arthurs said. "Especially now that I'm older, it's probably even more satisfying to win a tournament this late in my career. I'm going to savor every moment of it, that's for sure."

Arthurs, who turns 34 on March 17, is the second-oldest player on the ATP Tour behind 34-year-old Andre Agassi. The Australian is the first 33-year-old to win an ATP-level event since Tom Gullikson at Newport, Rhode Island in 1985.

For the second match in a row, Arthurs' opponent never reached break point. Arthurs held serve for his final 62 games of the tournament, 11 of them on Sunday.

"I felt that I couldn't miss my serve no matter how hard I hit it," Arthurs said. AP

NCR bags WNCAA crown

THE NATIONAL Capital Region survived a hard-fighting Visayas Region team, 25-21, 6-25, 25-16, 15-25, 15-3, to bag the volleyball title of the 3rd WNCAA National Championship Games last Sunday in Legazpi City.

NCR, represented by WNCAA champion Lyceum of the Philippines, first swept the three-game elimination round in Group A before outlasting the Cordillera Autonomous Region in the semis, 25-16, 25-13, 25-19.

Visayas also swept its elims games in Group B, went on to beat Mindanao in the semis, 25-15, 25-19, 25-20, but just could not match skills with their Big City counterparts.

In the battle for third place, Mindanao copped second runner-up honors after beating Cordillera Autonomous Region, 25-15, 25-18, 25-13.

The WNCAA 35th season and the 3rd WNCAA National Championship Games are co-presented by Kotex and sponsored by adidas, The Philippine Star, RPN 9, Monster Radio RX 93.1, Pantene and Café Lupe, in cooperation with Cadbury, Goldilocks, Molten, Mikasa, Citibank and Discovery Spa.

Lyceum coach Emil Lontoc was named Best Coach while Lady Pirate Angelica Bigcas duplicated her regular season feat by clinching Most Valuable Player honors.

Teammate Dahlia Cruz also made it to the Mythical Six.

OTHER SCHUMACHER: Toyota's Formula One driver Ralf Schumacher steers his machine at the newly renovated racing course during a demonstration drive at Fuji International Speedway in Oyama town, Shizuoka prefecture, some 100 kilometers southwest of Tokyo. The 15,057-feet new course features 1.500-meter main straight. AP

Celtics bring a lit into valley of the

PHOENIX—Antoine Walker scored 33 points in his second game back with Boston and the Celtics became the first Eastern Conference team to win in Phoenix this season with a 120-113 overtime victory.

The Suns were without Steve Nash for the third straight game with a sore hamstring, and Amare Stoudemire fouled out with 8:47 to play in regulation. Stoudemire left with 27 points, while Shawn Marion had 15 points and a career-high 20 rebounds.

Walker put up 32 shots, making 12, and grabbed 13 rebounds. Delonte West added 19 points, including the 3-pointer that gave Boston the lead for good, 111-109, with 1:56 left. Paul Pierce added 25 points for the Celtics.

Phoenix had won the first two without Nash, but coming off a 124-123 victory in Dallas on Saturday night, they couldn't hold off the remodeled Celtics, 2-0 since the trade that brought Walker back to Boston on Thursday. It was the Suns' first loss in 13 games at home against Eastern Conference teams.

Kings 110, Wizards 108

In Washington, Cuttino Mobley made two free throws with 1.5 seconds remaining, and Mike Bibby had 38 points, six rebounds and seven assists.

Gilbert Arenas scored 43 points for the Wizards, but his foul in the closing seconds sent Mobley to the line.

Bibby made 13 of 23 shots, including 5 of 9 from 3-point range, and 7 of 8 free throws. Mobley scored 18 points, and Brad Miller had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings.

Arenas made 16 of 32 field goals—including 7 of 11 3-pointers—in his fourth 40-point game of the season.

Nets 104, Cavaliers 98

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter had 34 points and 11 rebounds to help New Jersey win after squandering a 21-point lead.

Jason Kidd had 14 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds and rookie Nenad Krstic added 15 points as the Nets sent LeBron James and the Cavaliers to their sixth straight road loss.

James, who did not take a shot until late in the first quarter, had 28 points and seven assists. Jeff McInnis had 23 points and Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 20 points and 18 rebounds.

Down by 21 in the second quarter and 20 midway through the third, the Cavaliers tied the game with 8:38 left, but never took the lead.

Heat 112, Magic 103

In Orlando, Florida, Dwyane Wade scored 28 points, Eddie Jones added 24 and Miami beat Orlando for a second straight day.

The Heat won both contests without center Shaquille O'Neal, who sat out a fourth consecutive game with a sprained left knee.

Wade scored 11 points in the third quarter, helping the Heat build a nine-point lead. He also dished out 11 assists.

Grant Hill led the Magic with 34 points, while Steve Francis added 22 points and seven assists.

Nuggets 94, Hornets 93

In New Orleans, Carmelo Anthony scored 17 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter to help the Denver Nuggets overcome an 11-point deficit in the final 10 minutes.

Anthony hit all 14 free throws he took, 10 in the final period, and grabbed 10 rebounds. Earl Boykins scored 16 points, hitting all six of his free throws—including two with 4.6 seconds left to ice the game for Denver, which finished the game on a 15-7 run.

Dan Dickau hit a meaningless 3 at the buzzer and led New Orleans with 22 points.

The Nuggets shot 33-of-36 from the foul line, while the Hornets finished 19-of-24. Denver also outscored New Orlea on fast breaks while forcing 24 turnovers—the third straight Nuggets opponent had committed 20.

Timberwolves 91, Trail Blaze

In Portland, Oregon, Latrell S scored 27 points, including a go-a pointer with just more than a minu

The victory snapped Minneso game losing streak on the road, wh ed to a 92-83 win at Portland on Jan

The Timberwolves also swept the in their four-game series this seaso the first time Minnesota swept since the team joined the NBA in 19

Nick Van Exel scored 26 points Blazers, who have lost six of their la

Raptors 108, Lakers 102

In Toronto, Jalen Rose scored 2 including eight straight late in th quarter, to help the Raptors extend winning streak to three games.

Rose scored 10 of Toronto's last 1 as the Raptors closed out the game 3 run.

Kobe Bryant had 31 points for th who have lost two straight followin son-high three-game win streak.

Donyell Marshall added 19 r and nine rebounds for the Raptors, unbeaten since the All-Star br Toronto players reached double fi scoring.

Bucks 99, SuperSonics 73

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd sc points to lead the Bucks in Ray A turn to Milwaukee.

Allen, a fan favorite for more seasons with Milwaukee, scored 1 for Seattle on 4-for-16 shooting in game at the Bradley Center sin traded on Feb. 20, 2003.

Desmond Mason, a former me the Sonics, had 19 points and 11 r and Joe Smith added 16 points as th ended Seattle's three-game winning

Caguioa's star on the rise

AS OLD and worn out as the cliche might sound, in basketball, height is might. Somehow, Barangay Ginebra's Mark Caguioa does a pretty good job of proving that in his case, size doesn't really matter.

In the recent PBA Philippine Cup, the fleet-footed 5-foot-11 guard with the ankle-twisting crossover move proved that he can take on the giants of the game as he played a crucial part in the Kings' 4-2 championship series victory over the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

Despite being named the runaway 2001 PBA Rookie of the Year and currently one of Ginebra's superstars, the basketball endorser of clothing line No Fear has kept his feet firmly rooted to the ground.

"We believe that Mark Caguioa embodies the No Fear man. He is one player who knows his ultimate goals inside the basketball court and shows no fear in facing even the toughest challenges," No Fear management said in a statement.

Caguioa grew up in Mandaluyong from simple folks. Just to keep food on the table, his father went to Saudi Arabia to work.

And though life was difficult as he grew up, Caguioa never failed to dream.

While in grade school, Caguioa left with his family for the United States, where he was spotted by a sports agent touring the neighborhood in California.

CAGUIOA

PD

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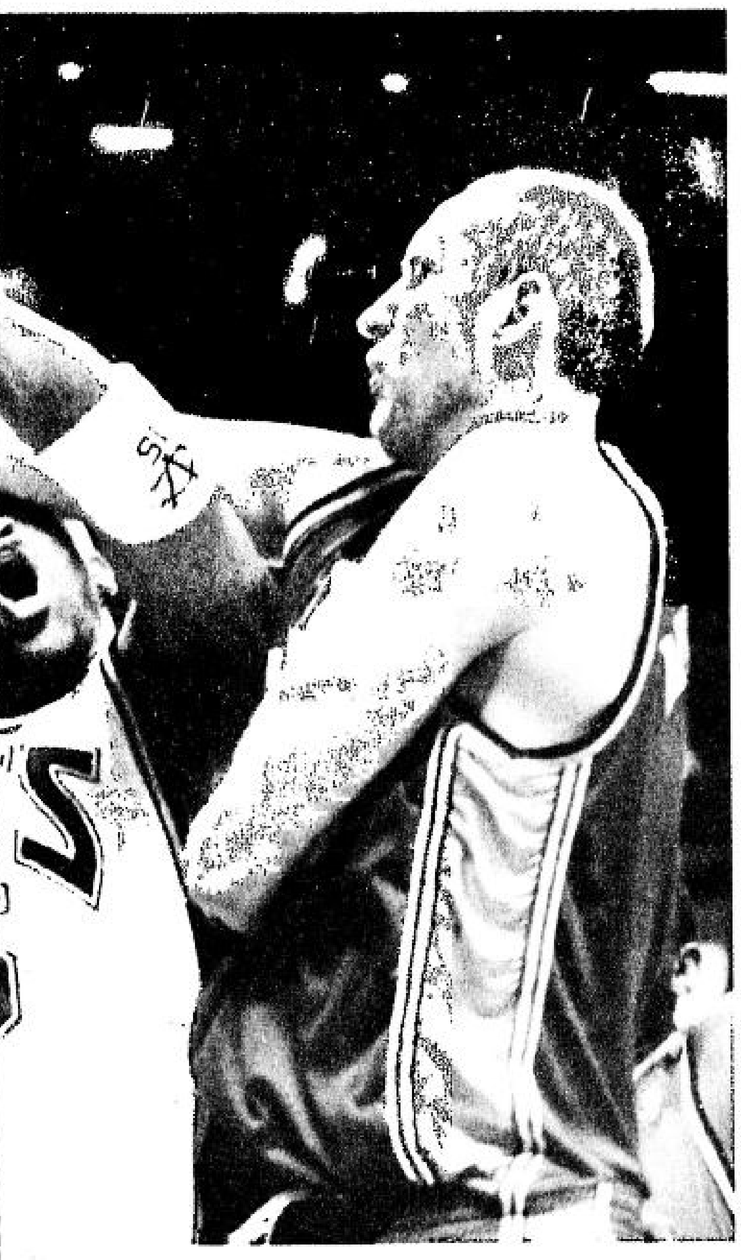

center Zydrunas Ilgauskas (right). REUTERS

Toms demolishes DiMarco, pockets Match Play title

CARLSBAD, California—David Toms played the best golf of his life, put his name in the record book with the biggest blowout in the Match Play Championship and barely broke a sweat while earning $1.3 million.

All he lacked was an explanation.

A major champion but hardly a juggernaut, Toms rolled through Phil Mickelson and Adam Scott to reach the semifinals, then beat Ian Poulter with the most dynamic stretch of golf ever seen at La Costa Resort.

He found an ever higher gear Sunday in the 36-hole final against Chris DiMarco, beating him so badly that Toms caught himself rehearsing his victory speech with 11 holes left in the match.

"I can't explain why I felt like I did all week," Toms said. "I just felt very, very comfortable with myself and the golf that was in front of me. I don't know that I've ever really felt like that."

Toms delivered the most dominant performance in the seven-year history of this fickle tournament, winning eight out of nine holes to put away DiMarco before lunch, then pouring it on in the afternoon.

The score was 6 and 5, by two holes the largest margin of victory in the Accenture Match Play Championship.

And it could have been worse.

Toms was 9 up at one point and had a chance to end the match on the 27th hole. Tournament officials trailed Toms over the final four holes with the Walter Hagen Trophy and a podium in the cart, waiting to set up the trophy presentation when the drubbing was over.

"That's the worst beating I've taken for sure," DiMarco said.

DiMarco played some of his best golf when it no longer mattered. He saved par from thick rough behind the ninth green, then made three straight birdies. All that did was spare ABC Sports more dead time in its telecast.

Toms made only four bogeys in six matches over four days on a soggy golf course with 6 inches of rough. He played 116 holes this week and was behind in only 10 of them.

Someone asked Toms for a turning point in his final match. He couldn't think of one.

"This whole round is kind of a blur," he said.

His record in the Accenture Match Play Championship improved to 18-5, second only to the 21-4 mark by two-time defending champion Tiger Woods.

It was his 11th career victory on the PGA Tour and moved Toms up to No. 9 in the world ranking.

"I've won a few tournaments along the way, but I never felt this at ease on the golf course," Toms said. "Not that it was easy. I just felt I could hit the shot no matter what it was. I have no idea how to explain it."

Toms lost to Woods, 2 and 1, in the final match two years ago when he fell 4 holes down in the morning round and fought just to extend the match to 35th hole.

He never gave DiMarco any hope.

DiMarco still looked like he was in a state of shock when Toms holed an 8-foot birdie putt on the 13th hole to end the match.

"They got a good champion," said DiMarco, whose $750,000 runner-up check was the largest of his career. AP

TOMS: I cannot explain it. REUTERS

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Jazz 99, Rockets 92

In Houston, Matt Harpring scored 28 points and Raja Bell added 21 for Utah.

Houston, which led by as many as 10 points in the first half, has dropped three straight after winning eight in a row.

Tracy McGrady led the Rockets with 23 points and Mike James, in his first game with Houston, added 21. He started after being traded from Milwaukee last week.

Pistons 94, Warriors 88

In Oakland, California, Tayshaun Prince had 23 points to help ruin Baron Davis' debut as a Warrior.

Davis, acquired in a trade with New Orleans on Thursday, didn't start and finished with 10 points and eight assists in 29 minutes.

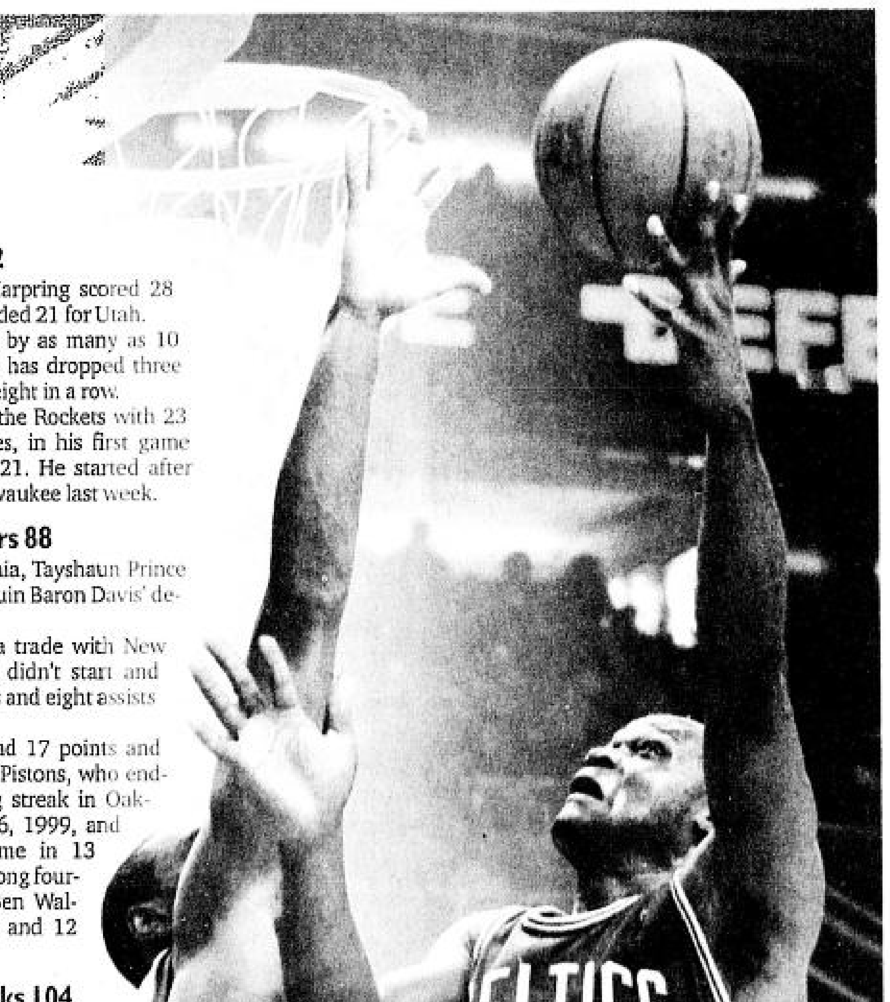
Rasheed Wallace had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Pistons, who ended a four-game losing streak in Oakland dating to Dec. 16, 1999, and won for the 12th time in 13 games since a season-long four-game losing streak. Ben Wallace added 14 points and 12 boards.

Clippers 111, Hawks 104

In Los Angeles, Corey Maggette scored 25 points to help the Clippers send Atlanta to its 19th consecutive road loss.

Chris Wilcox got all nine of his points in the final 7:26 after sitting the first three quarters and Bobby Simmons finished with 24 points for the Clippers, who have won two straight since a season-worst eight-game losing streak. Elton Brand had 12 points and 13 rebounds, and Chris Kaman contributed 14 points and 10 boards.

Tyronn Lue scored a season-high 24 points and Al Harrington added 23 for the Hawks. AP



BOSTON Celtics forward Antoine Walker (right) scores against Phoenix Suns center Steven Hunter. REUTERS

After loss to Jenny, Wie returns to high school

KAHUKU, Hawaii—When Michelle Wie returns to high school on Monday for her algebra and physics classes, she can tell her friends how she spent the weekend: She nearly won an LPGA tournament.

"She's an amazing player. There's no doubt about it," said Filipino winner Jennifer Rosales. "She's going to give us a lot of challenges and make us work harder."

Wie, a 15-year-old second-year student, finished two strokes behind Rosales in the season-opening SBS Open on Saturday. In difficult conditions on her home island of Oahu, Wie was the only player to shoot under par for three rounds. She also was the lone amateur in the field.

Wie was trying to supplant Marlene Hagge as the youngest LPGA Tour winner. Hagge was 18 when she won the 1952 Sarasota Open.

Wie, who shared second place with Cristie Kerr, would have earned $78,787 were she not an amateur. When told what she might have earned, she said, "that's not too much," an assessment that should send chills down the spine of any future date.

"Well, I don't really feel like, 'Oh, I should've turned pro, darn it,' I'm just happy with my second-place finish," she said. "I like having a pretty carefree life right now, not having to think about if I don't make the cut that means I make no money."

Wie has yet to win on the tour, but in 2004 she would have earned more than $250,000 in seven LPGA events, putting her in the top 50 on the money list. She had six top-20 finishes in seven LPGA events last year, including fifth at the Kraft Nabisco Championship, the tour's first major of the year. This was her best finish in 18 LPGA starts.

"She is a veteran at 15, if she can be called that," Kerr said. "She has an amazing game and is a real sweet girl."

With companies like Nike and Adidas watching, Wie already is one of the world's most marketable golfers. She commands large galleries and has international appeal: Young, talented, photogenic and bilingual. Wie is fluent in Korean and is taking Japanese classes.

"We have to be patient. We can't get too ahead of ourselves," LPGA commissioner Ty Votaw said. "I think what we have to look 25 years from now and look back on what she's accomplished, and not after any one week.

"She's still 15 years old and she's trying to do things that no other 15-year-old has done," he added. "That's certainly empowering all the young girls out there to say there's no limitations."

SHE'S an amazing player, Rosales says of Wie. AP

Wie started the final round five strokes behind Rosales, then shot her third straight 2-under 70 to finish at 6-under 210. She didn't notice she was in contention until seeing her name on the leaderboard late in the day.

"I thought, 'Wow, that feels pretty good,'" she said.

Wie will play seven more LPGA events this year, including all four majors.

"I think my game got a lot more consistent," she said. "I shot what I wanted to, consistently under par. I just have to work on eliminating those stupid mistakes and making a lot more birdies."

Wie began drawing international attention in 2002. A seventh-grader with braces, she became the youngest player to qualify for an LPGA event at age 12.

She's still waiting to make the weekend field at a US PGA Tour event. Wie missed the cut at the Sony Open last month. The previous year, Wie beat 47 men at the Sony but fell one shot short of qualifying for the last two rounds.

By not playing golfers her own age, Wie does not win often. Tiger Woods took notice of that, saying there is an "art form to winning, and learning how to win different ways."

"What she's doing might hurt her," Woods said this year in Hawaii. "But in the end, she might be so talented she might just win everything. And it might be a new way of doing it." AP

PHOTO

Bonds surprises Giants with a few swings

NEW YORK—Barry Bonds surprised his San Francisco Giants teammates when he jumped into the batting cage to take a few swings against new closer Armando Benitez on Sunday, just four weeks after knee surgery.

Bonds faced nine pitches from Benitez at the Giants' spring training stadium in Scottsdale, Arizona, only taking two swings—hard grounders to the right side of the infield.

But just being at home plate is significant progress for the 40-year-old National League MVP.

"Just to stand in the cage and track balls was enough for me, just to show that to my teammates," Bonds said.

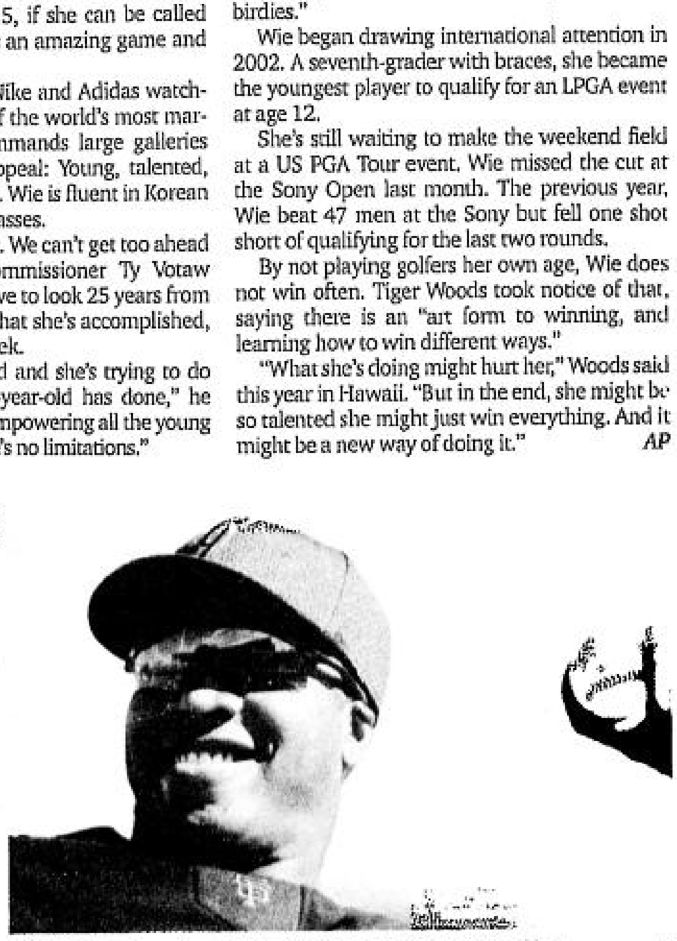
With several new teammates on San Francisco's reloaded roster, Bonds seems determined to participate in as many group activities as possible leading up to Thursday's Cactus League opener in major league baseball spring training. He also participated in the team's stretching exercises before a light workout day for the Giants and played catch in the outfield.

"I'm one of those guys that just tries to keep himself ready for a game," Bonds said. "It's different, very different, but the good news is that my leg is coming to ground sound. The rehab is working, but I've still got a lot to do."

Benitez, who signed with the Giants as a free agent during the winter, was startled when his star teammate stepped into the cage. He threw Bonds a few fastballs and one changeup that caused the slugger to smile.

"I didn't know he wanted to be in there," Benitez said. "He said, 'Why are you throwing me a changeup?' I said, 'Hey, man, I have to work a lot on this stuff.'"

At Kissimmee, Florida, Atlanta manager Bobby Cox all but announced John Smoltz will be the Braves' opening-day starter. While Cox hasn't revealed his choice, he's already set up his spring pitching schedule in such a way that Smoltz would be ready to go in the April 5 opener at Florida. AP



BARRY Bonds smiles while playing catch with Moises Alou. AP

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

We can form competitive team for ABC—Calma

CALMA: Three-time PBA All-Star

HECTOR Calma, a key figure in the last Philippine men's basketball team to win the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) crown, believes the national team should be versatile and big to be competitive in the international arena.

"The talent and dedication of the players are a given," said Calma, starting point guard of the 1982 ABC Youth champion team and the 1985 Men's ABC which advanced to the World Championship. "It would be good for the team to have players who can play multiple positions."

Calma , now 44, is the team manager of the Coca-Cola Tigers in the PBA.

Among the three Tigers in the 40-man pool, Calma thinks John Arigo and Rafi Reavis have better chances to make the final cut yesterday.

"Both can play multiple positions and they are quick for their size," Calma, one of the PBA's greatest 25 players, explained.

Arigo, 6-foot-4, can play the 1-2-3 spots while Reavis, 6-foot-9, can play the 3-4-5 positions.

Ali Peek, the other Tiger in the pool, plays the power-forward spot but is no more than 6-foot-4.

"During our time Ali would be able to dominate. But now it's difficult to play inside if you don't have the ceiling," said Calma.

A three-time PBA All-Star, Calma said Arigo and Reavis could even make the starting five with San Miguel Beer's Danny Seigle and Barangay Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand and Eric Menk.

"Coach Chot would have many options with this first five," said Calma. "He can go small or go big in his rotation."

Calma made it clear though that he, in any way, doesn't want to preempt the ongoing selection process.

"This is just my personal view. Coach Chot and his staff are in a better position to know what's best for the team," Calma stressed. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

HOISTING championship trophies, like in the just-concluded Champion's League, is becoming a habit for the Tamaraws. JOSEPH AGCAOILI

Banal's legacy stays with the FEU Tams

KOY Banal had already left the Far Eastern University Tamaraws but it was still the same team he molded to near perfection.

The Tamaraws breezed through the Third Philippine Collegiate Champions League, hardly encountering stiff resistance from the rest of the field to retain the title they captured running away last year.

And it's hard to ignore that the Tamaraws won a back-to-back crown at the expense of the University of the East Warriors because of the foundations that Banal had laid down.

League MVP Arwind Santos, RJ Rizada, Mark Isip and Denok Miranda were all products of Banal's system, an approach FEU interim coach Robert Flores wouldn't be taking for granted.

"This (FEU) is still his (Banal) team," said Flores after the Tamaraws crushed the rookie-laden Warriors, 69-49, in the Champions' League Finals Sunday night.

"What we're trying to do now is improve what has already been started," he added.

Seeded in the round-of-eight by virtue of their runner-up finish in the UAAP last year, the Tamaraws beat University of the Philippines in the quarterfinals and arranged a title duel with the Warriors after trouncing University of Visayas in the semifinals.

Banal's chief deputy while calling the shots for the Tamaraws, Flores has been working closely with former PBA star Glenn Capacio on the FEU bench.

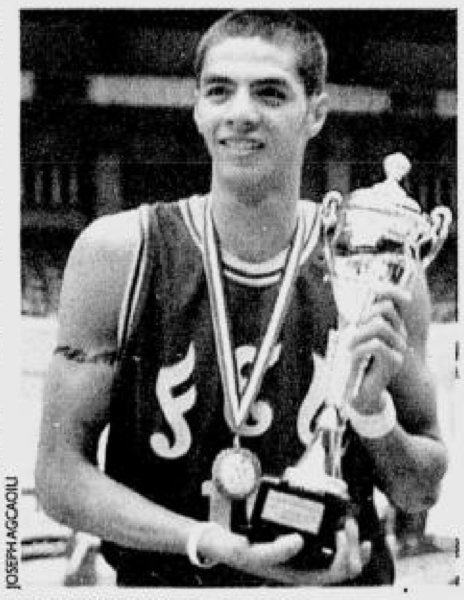
FEU management did not renew Banal's contract at the start of the year but offered a consultant's job instead, which he turned down. Banal has been coaching Magnolia-FEU in the PBL.

Except for Miranda, who had spent his five-year UAAP eligibility, the Tamaraw lineup remains intact should Santos, a top PBA prospect, decide to play for another season.

FEU bigwig Anton Montinola said the Tamaraws would most likely parade the same roster in the UAAP after winning the tournament sponsored by Petron, Air21, adidas, Glaxo SKF, Wilson and Pascual Laboratories.

On their chances in the UAAP, Montinola said: "It's too early to tell. There are other leagues we must compete in before we could assess our chances."

Organizers led by tournament chair Rey Gamboa, Arben Santos and Ed Mapa have promised another smashing success in the league's 2006 edition.


JOSEPH AGCAOILI

ANOTHER MVP for Arwind Santos.

Santos said the timing of the tournament was the key to success since the collegiate leagues, the PBL and the PBA are off during February.

Housewife runs to help family tide things over

PASIG RIV
1st PLACE
DIAZ: I'm not joining marathons to beat records or be in the national team. RUDY ESPERAS

By Jasmine W. Payo

RECORDS do not concern her.

Stella Mamac Diaz admitted that practical reasons have been driving her to compete in national marathons.

"I'm doing this to help my family," said Diaz in Filipino, after ruling the 42K women's category in the Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River that wound up at The Fort in Taguig City last Sunday.

Diaz, who foiled Liza Delfin's bid to defend her title, clocked 3 hours, 8 minutes and 10 seconds to bag the P75,000 prize.

"I'm just a housewife," said the 33-year-old Diaz. "I'm not joining marathons to beat records or be in the national team."

The diminutive Diaz shared that life back home in Davao isn't easy. In fact, a local politician shouldered her plane ticket to compete in the Pasig marathon.

A mother of three young children, Diaz has been training under the watchful eyes of her husband, Placido.

Placido was a former marathon runner. But financial constraints forced him to look for a more stable job. He now works as a bus inspector in Davao.

What she lacked in formal training, Diaz made up for it with hours of practice. In fact, their husband-and-wife training tandem proved to be effective.

Diaz finished almost a minute ahead of the favored Delfin, duplicating her feat in the women's category of the 42K Milo Marathon last November.

Dableo, 11 others share Palawan Open lead

REIGNING Asian 3.2a zonal champion International Master Ronald Dableo defeated National Master Winston Silva after 35 moves of a Slav Defense to share the lead in the 2005 Palawan Open Chess championship being held at the Puerto, Princesa Coliseum.

Masama ang opening *ni* Winston (Silva) *kaya nakalamang agad ako ng piyon* (His opening was bad, so I gained a pawn," said the 27-year-old Dableo via a long-distance interview yesterday.

The top-seeded Dableo earlier disposed local bet Anthony Lungcay in 35 moves of English Opening to share top spot with IM Richard Bitoon, IM Barlo Nadera, Fide Master Jessie Sales, NM Darwin Laylo, NM Mirabeau Maga, Rodolfo Panopio Jr., NM Renato Seratubias, NM Rustom Tolention and Edmundo Gatus.

Bitoon posted victories at the expense of Bocs Sumalapao and Roger Seratubias while 2004 National Open champion Laylo beat Edward Guevarra and NM Ramil Galang, respectively.

NMs Emmanuel Senadorsdaro and Ronaldo Nolte head a big group of 1.5 pointers.

The event is sponsored by the city government of Puerto Princesa headed by Mayor Edward Hagedorn and Vice Mayor Lucilo Bayron. The nine rounds Swiss system competition stakes P30,000 to the champion. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

SPORTSWATCH

RP faces tough fight vs Korea

THE PHILIPPINES is up against another struggle this weekend when the National Team battles South Korea in the first round of the Asia-Oceania Zone Group II Davis Cup Competitions at the Philippine Columbian Association indoor courts on March 4, 5 and 6. The Filipinos composed of players Johnny Arcilla, Joseph Victorino, Rolando Ruel Jr. and Patrick John Tierro, with Martin Misa as coach and Johnny Jose as non-playing captain, will face a raw but talented South Korean squad which includes the reigning PCA Open champion on March 4 to 6 in a best-of-five matches tie. And if the three-set rout dealt Arcilla by Hee-Seok Chung in the 2004 PCA Open finals should be an indication, the Filipinos face an uphill battle. The South Koreans are reinforced by Dong-Hyun Kim, Woong Sun Jun, Sun-Yong Kim and Hyun-Jook Suk. The team is coached by Yong-Il Yoon with veteran cupper Gap-Taik Ro as non-playing captain. The draw will be held Thursday morning at the Philippine Columbian Association.

Philmasters dartfest in Baguio

THE COUNTRY'S dart masters are headed for a hot showdown in cool Baguio City with the staging of Philmasters 2005 from March 4-6 at the Cozy Nook Magsaysay at No. 348 Magsaysay Ave., Baguio City. PhilMasters 2005 is among the Darts Council of the Philippines "Big Four" ranking and rating event. Hosted by the Baguio Darters Association Inc., the event is being supported by lawyer Isagani Nerez and Douglas Rufino of BCVAC, Philippine Sports Commission, Toby's Sports, Winmau Darts, Terton Craft and Cozy Nook Internet Cafe. Aside form the total prize of P104,000, cups and medals, top placers in the novice, women's and men's open singles will earn ranking points that may qualify them as members of the national pool. The tournament starts with the Novice/Non-Rated draw doubles at 10:30 a.m. For inquiries, call 843-6456 c/o director Amante Santos or the BDAI c/o Benny Davic (0917-82588101 and Norman Seo-as (0915-4414306).

NCA presents derby at Araneta

THE PREMIER National Cockers Association (NCA) presents another 7-cock derby today at the fully air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Derby starts at 5 p.m., featuring 58 top quality fights in the elimination round. All qualifiers will advance to the finals on Thursday. Today's hosts are Bebot Uy of Davao. noted breeder Boy Jiao of Rizal and the Firefly Group. Another NCA 7-Cock Derby fires off on March 15 and 17 with co-hosts Jet Fernando of Pampanga, MTJ Brothers, Gov. Ito Ynares and Albert Dichavez. On April 5 and 7 is another NCA 7-cocker with Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers, John Capinpin and Ruel Feliciano as hosts. The NCA stag screening committee will also start today the screening and wingbanding of cockerels in different gamefarms all over the country. Cockers and breeders may call 9112928 and 9113101 for details.

Philippine Airlines
MEMBERS of the victorious Luisita golf team (from left) King Sumulong, Alex Montelibano, Gov. Tommy Joson, Domeng Duerme, tournament director, Jimmy Bautista, PAL President and COO, Ritchie Garcia, Iggy Clavecilla, Henry So Uy, PAL EVP, Carlo Gamban and Francis Gaston pose with PAL officers after winning the 19th PAL Interclub, Seniors division. Not in photo is Bong de Guzman. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Pasay Cockpit's new hackfight format

PASAY City Cockpit's new hackfight format (2-cock ulutan) will start on Sunday with each champion guaranteed to receive P6,000. Entry fee is P1,100. This will be held regularly every Sunday and Wednesday. The Fastest Kill Challenge One-Cock Ulutan is scheduled every Monday and Tuesday, dangling a guaranteed prize of P25,000 to the winners. Registration fee is P100. Meanwhile, the second edition of Superfights One-Cock Ulutan Fastest Kill Challenge is set on March 14 and 16, with a bigger prize of P1.1 million. Entry fee is P2,500. The grand champion will get P200,000. "Prizes are at stake up to the 40th placers," said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. Last January, a total of 404 entries were registered in the New Year Superfights won by Arnel Geronga of Bulacan who posted the fastest winning time of 13 seconds. For inquiries, contact 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750.

Super Ulutan starts today at Pasig Square

A GALORE of prizes and giveaways, amounting to P500,000 await the winners in the One-Cock Super Ulutan today at the Pasig Square Garden. Promoters Kags Paliza, Aba Badiola and Sam Mendoza of Rizal said the event will start at 7 a.m. since more than 200 entries are competing. Entry fee is P2,200. The top five prizes are as follows: first, P135,000; second, P70,000; third, P50,000; fourth, P20,000 and one six cu. ft. refrigerator and fifth, P15,000 and 21-inch color TV. The sixth to 30th placers will also receive prizes. The first 20 winners will get a mountain bike each while the first 20 losers will get a sack of rice each. The last ten winners will get a mountain bike each. For details, contact 6465858 and 6465828.

GOLF WINNERS—Rene Romua (sixth from left) displays the trophy he won for topping the three-leg Manila golf series of Goin' Bananas of San Jose, California, recently. Romua finished with 89 points in the series held alternately at Highlands, Wack Wack and Canlubang courses. Bernie Sana and Mike Miles (fifth and seventh from left) finished second and third, respectively. From left, are: Rey Tang, tournament director; Norman Viray, Goin' Bananas team manager; Luis Cuasay, Lito Reyes, Ben Reduta, Rick Medel, team captain; Rico Medina, William Pizarro and Art Gabon. Guest champion is Dr. Ramon Ocampo.

'My House in Umbria'

Emmy winner Maggie Smith delivers a powerful performance that demands to be seen—a glorious exercise in thespic restraint and subtlety—in this HBO movie

CHRIS COOPER and Maggie Smith get amorous ... well, almost

From page A32

She expresses her grief through the violent paintings she creates.

The group soon forms a strong bond and Emily herself grows increasingly attached to the girl. When the stoic Thomas arrives to fetch Aimee, Emily's fears and vulnerability begin to unravel. While she finds his detachment disrespectful, even offensive, she is also drawn to it. But the American academic openly scoffs at her drunken sexual advances. She realizes that her fantasy world is about to crumble.

Never soggy

Working on a brilliant script based on William Trevor's 1991 novella, Loncraine ("The Gathering Storm," "Band of Brothers") delivers a film that, despite its seemingly languid tone, never bores. The director—who won an Emmy for "Band" and the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for 1995's "Richard III"—tells the story at his preferred unhurried pace, but his film's narrative deftly limns together the strengths and imperfections of its protagonists. The movie is touching but never soggy, substantial but never kitschy.

Unlike Audrey Wells' uplifting "Under the Tuscan Sun" (2003), though, "Umbria" is not just a sweet tale with a cozy postcard setting peppered with romantic melancholia. Yes, the lush countryside setting is easy on the eyes, but that's just icing on this sumptuous cinematic cake. The film gains momentum when the emotional demons that disturb each character begins to surface. Despite their weaknesses, you'll find yourself rooting for them because it's easy to relate to their struggles.

Poweful

Emmy winner Maggie Smith delivers a powerful performance that demands to be seen — a glorious exercise in thespic restraint and subtlety, as usual. When Thomas rebuffs Emily's advances, you almost feel the naked pain that seethes through the actress' eyes and body.

But it's also Smith's fierce honesty that ultimately brings Emily redemption. The romance novelist's sagacious spirit has seen her through the worst moments of her life; it's no wonder she manages to be optimistic even in dire situations. As she glibly explains: "The somber side of things doesn't appeal to me."

As little Aimee prepares to leave Umbria, she wonders if she can find happiness in her new life. Emily offers a piece of advice: "Life is not like my stories. Sometimes you have to make your own happy ending."

"My House in Umbria" premieres 8:20 tonight on HBO.

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AVIATOR PG13 11:40,2:55,6:10,9:30	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA PG13 12:30,3:20,6:10,9:00	AVIATOR PG13 12:30,3:50,7:10,10:30

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1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 (DOLBY) FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 (DTS) ALFIE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3327
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 (DOLBY) MAD HOUSE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) BULLETS
2 NIGHT JOB
3 PUNLA
4 (DTS) SIDEWAYS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) CONSTANTINE
2 RAISING STRIPE
3 (DTS) ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4 KILABOT AT KEMBOT
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 DREAMBOY
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 (DTS) LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 (DOLBY) FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 CONSTANTINE
3 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
4 RAISING STRIPE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 NIGHT JOB
2 SON OF THE MASK

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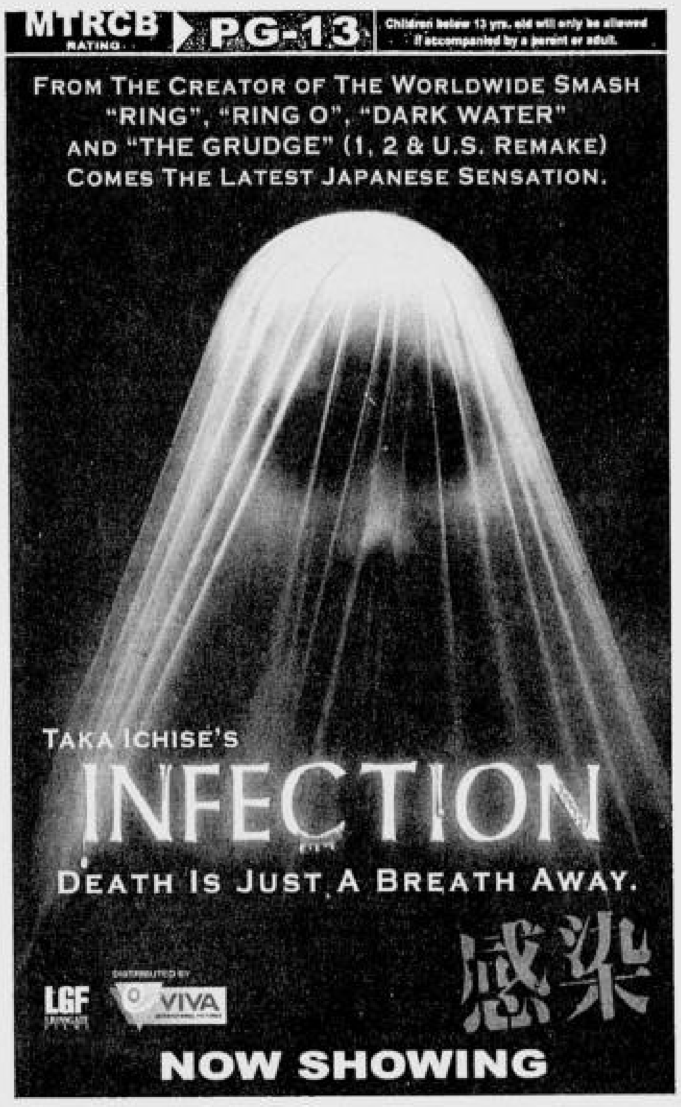

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SON OF THE MASK 12.50 / 3.35 / 6:20 / 9.05
SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 12:10 / 2.30 / 4.50 / 7.10 / 9.30
INFECTION 2:00 / 4:20 / 6.40 / 9:00
RAY-LIFE STORY OF RAY CHARLES 1:30 / 6:50
LET THE LOVE BEGIN 1:30 / 4:00 / 6.30 / 9:00
CONSTANTINE 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 12:15 / 3.20 / 6.25 / 9:30
SHALL WE DANCE 1.30 / 4.00 / 6.30 / 9.00
SIDEWAYS 4:15 / 9.35

ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ THE AVIATOR 1:00 / 4:25 / 7:50
❷ CONSTANTINE 12.40 / 3:20 / 6:00 / 8:40
❸ SON OF THE MASK 12:00 / 2:45 / 5:30 / 8.15
❹ SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 11:00 / 1:20 / 3.40 / 6:00 / 8:20
❺ LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:30 / 3:00 / 5.30 / 8.00
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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Superbowl Of China & Food Express *Level 3, Gateway Mall*

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Editor Louie C. Camino
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'My House in Umbria'

By Rito P. Asilo

REVIEW

FOR ROMANCE novelist Emily Delahunty (Maggie Smith), the aging protagonist of Richard Loncraine's "My House in Umbria," the world is a land of fairy tales inhabited by beautiful damsels in distress and the dashing heroes who come to their rescue—not unlike the fictional worlds and characters she creates for her romantic bestsellers.

She readily admits: "Romantic fiction is not great literature."

For the English ex-pat, her vivid imagination and the sprawling villa she owns in the idyllic Umbrian countryside in Italy are a refuge from her lonely life and dark past. Is she anything like the privileged heroines in her novels who lead lives that have happily-ever-after endings? One clue: None of her books carries her real name. In fact, she hides behind three pseudonyms!

On a shopping trip one day, Emily boards a Milan-bound train. She looks around the crowded carriage and cheerfully imagines romantic scenarios for her fellow passengers: an American couple and their inquisitive 8-year-old daughter, Aimee (Emily Clarke); a retired British general and his family, and a pair of young German lovers.

Changed lives

Suddenly, a bomb goes off, and these people's lives, including Emily's, are changed forever.

The next time Emily opens her eyes, she is lying, bruised all over, in a hospital. Like Aimee, the young German man Werner (Benno Furmann), and the military retiree (Ronnie Barker), she has survived the blast. No one else in that carriage did.

Emily is moved by the other victims' grief and finds a common ground with them. She mutters dryly: "I'm the only one who didn't lose a loved one—having none to lose." As the story unfolds, we find that her demons go beyond physical pain and psychological torment.

Eager to help, she invites them to recuperate in her villa for the duration of the investigation, and as they await the arrival of Aimee's only surviving relative, her married but childless uncle Thomas (Chris NCooper). Alas, the young girl appears unscathed, but has lost her ability to speak.

'MY HOUSE/A31

star group of cinemas movie guide IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
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3 Let The Love Begin
4 Constantine
5 Night Job

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
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1 Infection
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6 Son of the Mask

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CINEMA 2
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PG13

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① SON OF THE MASK
MTRCB (GP)
12:05, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00 LMF

② LEMONY SNICKET'S A Series of Unfortunate Events MTRCB (GP)
11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

③ AVIATOR
MTRCB (PG - 13)
11:00, 2:30, 6:00, 9:30 LMF

④ CONSTANTINE
MTRCB (PG - 13)
11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
MTRCB (PG-13) 12:15, 3:10, 6:05, 9:00 LMF
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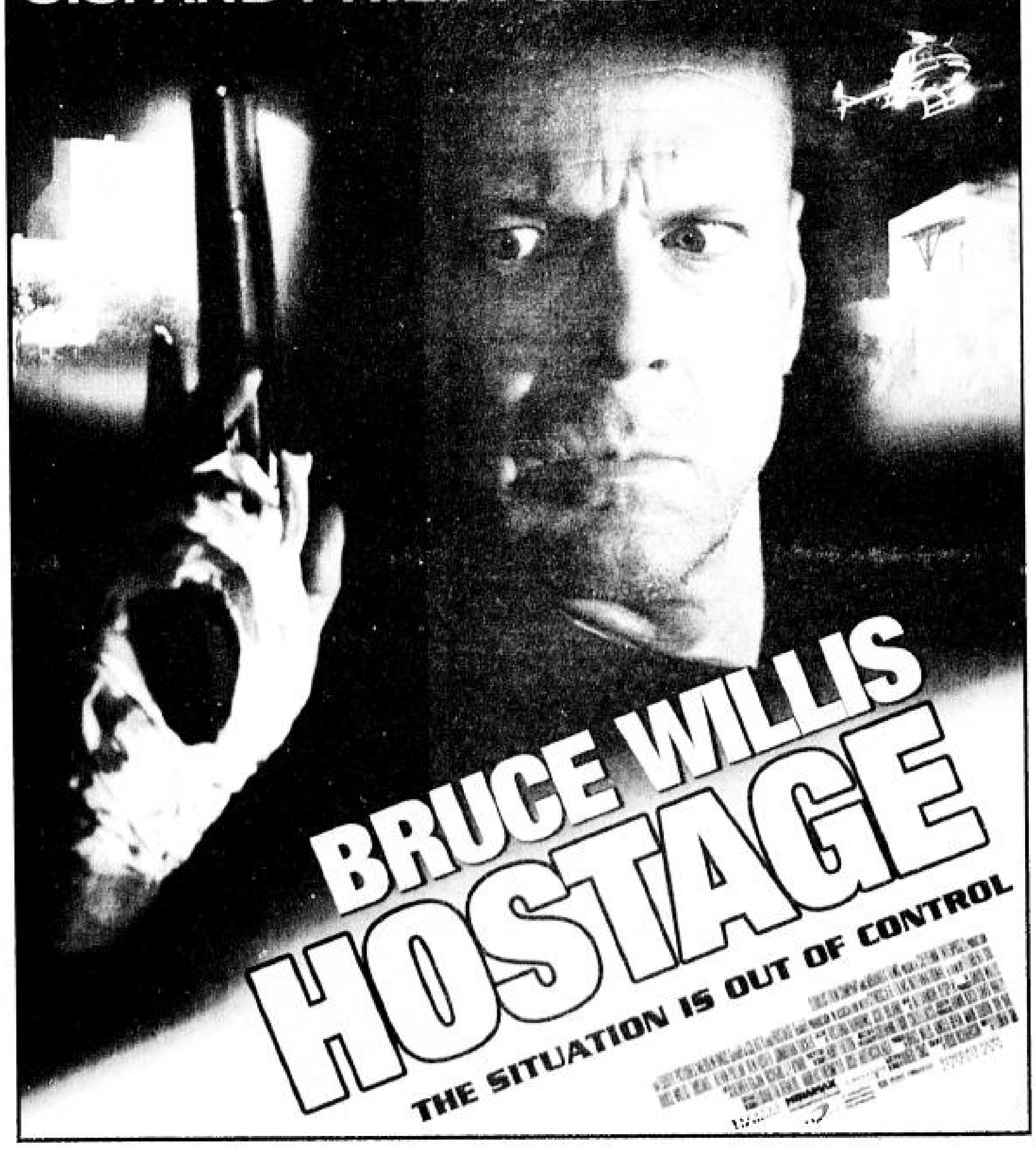
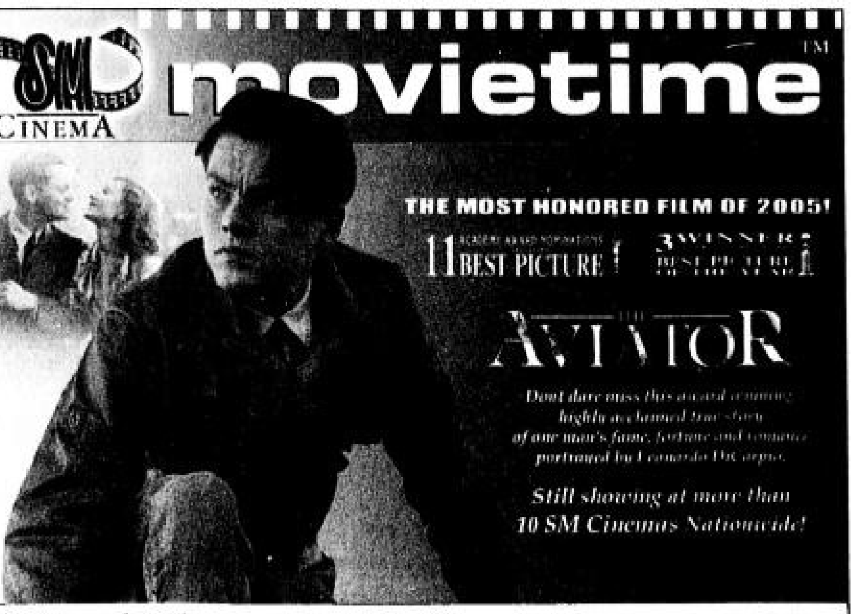
Shangri-La Plaza


SIMULTANEOUS SHOWING
U.S. AND PHILIPPINES - MARCH 9
BRUCE WILLIS
HOSTAGE
THE SITUATION IS OUT OF CONTROL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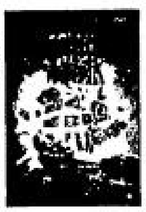
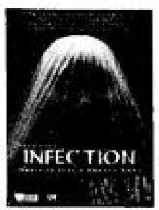

SON OF MASK
MTRCB Rating: G


INFECTION
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
MTRCB Rating: G

THE AVIATOR
MTRCB Rating: PG

LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
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9:00 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 12:00 END
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sm cebu cinema 1
CONSTANTINE
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METRO MANILA

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2
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sm city fairview
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7 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
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sm city north edsa
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5 smcinemaexclusive
6 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
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sm city manila
1 THE AVIATOR
2 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 SON OF THE MASK
6 CONSTANTINE
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
9 INFECTION
10 DREAMBOY
11 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12 CONSTANTINE

sm city sta. mesa
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8 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
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sm city southmall
1 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
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sm city bicutan
1 THE AVIATOR
2 SON OF THE MASK
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 CONSTANTINE

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
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4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 CONSTANTINE
3 THE AVIATOR
4 SON OF THE MASK

LUZON

sm city pampanga
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sm city baguio
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 CONSTANTINE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

sm city batangas
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 CONSTANTINE
4 RAISE YOUR VOICE

sm city dasmariñas
1 INFECTION
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 CONSTANTINE

sm city marilao
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 RACING STRIPES
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm city bacoor
1 DREAMBOY
2 INFECTION
3 SON OF THE MASK
4 THE AVIATOR
5 CONSTANTINE
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
7 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city lucena
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 MAD HOUSE
4 DREAMBOY

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
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8 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

sm city iloilo
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 RESERVED
3 WITHOUT A PADDLE
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 CONSTANTINE
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 RESERVED
8 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city davao
1 CONSTANTINE
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 RACING STRIPES
5 DREAMBOY
6 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city cagayan de oro
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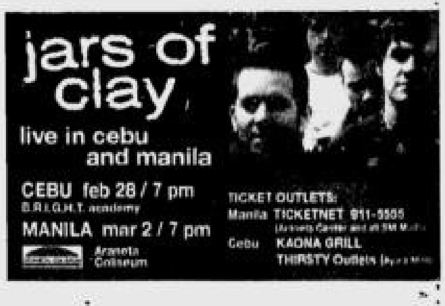
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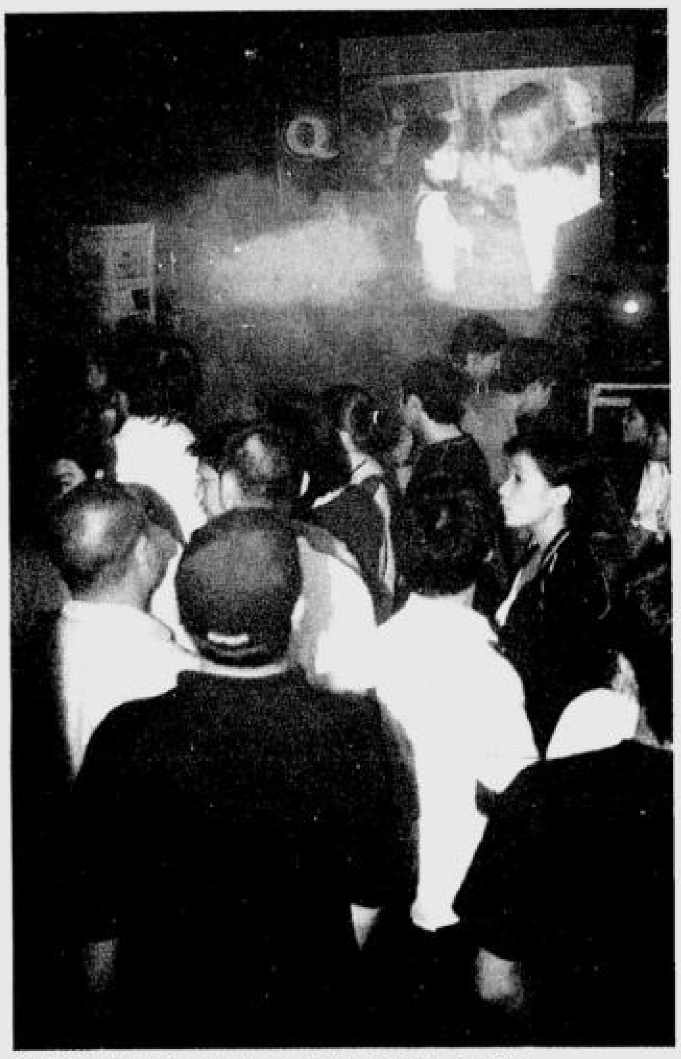
INQuest
The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER ADVENTURE

ROVILSON FERNANDEZ, TV host, emcees Thursday launch. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

PARTY POOPER. Six suspects are cuffed.

Murder mystery at the Inquirer



STANDSTILL. Murder stops all action at Purple Pear.

By Marinel R. Cruz

ANYONE can be a CSI, or crime scene investigator. Anyone, that is, who decides to help solve a murder mystery woven by the very people who bring you this newspaper.

"INQuest: The Philippine Daily Inquirer Adventure," the first SMS-based multimedia mystery game in the country, was launched last Feb. 24 at the Absinth Bar in Greenbelt, Makati.

Through "INQuest," readers are challenged to "probe into the most exciting adventure of intrigue, suspicion and deceit."

"CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," aired on AXN cable TV, follows a tightly knit forensics team as they solve gruesome and confounding crimes with high-tech gadgets, acute logic and, of course, the pieces of evidence they gather.

For eight straight weeks, INQUIRER readers are invited to closely follow a fictional murder case, play detective and identify the murderer.

The plot

Customer Jerson Morales is murdered at the parking lot of the Purple Pear bar. There are six suspects (they were presented on Thursday night): Barton, party addict and car racing enthusiast; Vivien, wedding planer; Cynthia, owner of Purple Pear bar; Gian, student and bartender; Jeng, the sensitive and vulnerable girl; and Pipo, a diligent father.

Starting March 6, clues will be published in various sections of the INQUIRER, posted on INQ7.net and aired on INQUIRER TV (Thursdays, 10:30 p.m., on ABC Channel 5).

Participants can also participate in the raffle and accumulate reward points by sending their answers via text message to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk N' Text subscribers.

PDI MARKETING staff led by their boss, Donald Lim, top left

There is no limit to the number of entries/answers, which will also earn points for the participants. Prizes at stake are five Apple iPods, four Canon Digicams, and a shopping spree worth P250,000 for the grand draw.

The INQuest launch party was hosted by Rovilson Fernandez of "Gameplan," Studio 23. Drinks were provided by GSM Blue.

The party's first 10 registrants each won INQUIRER Guyito products.

Present during the event were PDI President Alexandra "Sandy" Prieto-Romualdez, PDI VP for Marketing Donald Lim, VP for Advertising Pepito Olarte, AVP for Advertising Kenny Nuyda, HR and Admin Division Manager Rolly Suarez and VP for Information Technology and Pre-press Gary Libby.

(e-mail the author at mcruz@inquirer.com.ph)

TV SPECIALS THIS WEEK

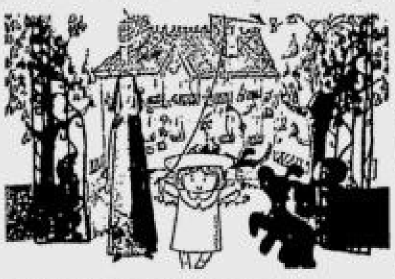
Cartoon Network

STARTING March 4, 6 p.m. "Fridays: Premiere" brings all-new episodes of "Justice League Unlimited." With the help of additional super heroes, the original League members must fight old and new villains.

March 5 at 7:30 p.m., "Madeleine—Lost in Paris" premieres.

And starting March 6, Sundays at 2 p.m., join Fat Albert and his friends as they learn about life while growing up in a Philadelphia neighborhood in "Fat Albert & the Crosby Kids."

March 7, the world-famous bird with the wacky laugh will make his CN debut on "The Woody Woodpecker Show," weekdays, 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.



Hallmark Channel

"THE FAIRYTALER," a tribute to renowned Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen and his contribution to children's literature, premieres March 5.

The special consists of 28 episodes, each one re-telling familiar and beloved stories, such as "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Little Mermaid," "The Princess and the Pea," "Thumbelina" and "The Snowqueen."

March 6, the series "True Women Stories" premieres with "The Lives of Saints," an epic tale surrounding a family held together by secrets that have defined the lives of its individual members for 22 years.

Star Chinese Movies

AFTER their team-up in Wong Kar Wai's "As Tears Go By" 16 years ago, Andy Lau and Jacky Cheung are together again in "Jiang Hu," which premieres March 5 at 9 p.m. Lau and Cheung are cast as a pair of gangsters who are the best of friends within a secret society that has its own complex codes of etiquette.

Star Chinese Movies is available on Dream Satellite, premium Sky Cable, Home Cable and Parasat.

Desperation of the three-minute stand-up comic

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

STAND-UP comedy is popular entertainment fare in the US, especially when it deals with current and controversial topics. Whenever we're in the States, we look for comedy clubs and are delighted to see many "unknown" comedians getting big laughs with jokes they themselves have written.

Many stand-up comics have been featured on late-night TV shows like "The Tonight Show," and have gone on to TV-film stardom. So, comedy clubs in the US often offer a preview of some of tomorrow's entertainment stars while they're still honing their laughmaking skills and testing their jokes on the club's regular patrons.

Now, outstanding stand-up comedians can fast-track their stellar ascent by competing in TV's comedy Olympics, a talent search titled "Last Comic Standing." The tilt gives 20 comics three minutes each to strut their hopefully funny stuff, and 10 of the best are chosen each week to go to the next round.

The 10 survivors are given a three-week comedy tutorial that further hones their ability to tickle their audience's collective funny bone. And the best of the best are singled out for special showcasing designed to transform them into stars.

We've caught the show a number of times, and we've been impressed by the heretofore unheralded talents that it has discovered for the TV audience. They come from big cities and small towns, represent a veritable rainbow of ethnicities, and wear their hearts—on their tongues!

Many of them are battle-scarred veterans of the small-time comedy wars, so their acts tend to be more sour than funny.

But other contestants enthrall viewers with their passionate zest for life, even if it has hit them with some low blows through the years.

What does it take for the ambitious 20 to impress the panel of judges (made up of established comedians) to end up among the surviving 10? Ambition does help, but true to themselves, and their personal loves, hates, issues and angsts.

JERRY SEINFELD is among the very successful ones.

It is that selfless willingness to share private aspects of themselves (expressed in a funny way, of course) that endears them to viewers. They recognize the desperation of the three-minute comics on the show, and reward it with the heady prospect of TV, club and film stardom.

Feedback

FROM **Analyn L. Agballog:** "I appreciate so much your untiring support for viewers and your great effort in reminding TV networks of their responsibilities. For example, those TV hosts who are not responsible enough in their work. They don't give a good example when they say bad words or crack green jokes that young viewers may imitate.

"Male hosts on noontime TV shows should be discreet enough not to look intently at female contestants, and to keep their hands to themselves.

"TV hosts should be intelligent, articulate, with good educational background and experience, so viewers can get something substantial from their shows. TV executives should give less importance to looks and popularity, because viewers don't like being taken for granted. We want something good that will uplift us!

"Viewers now aren't satisfied with pretty but brainless hosts. We want intelligent hosts because we are thinking people. To get the reforms we want, we shouldn't remain inactive, we should voice out our opinions."

Movies on TV

ON HBO, March 1 at 8:20 p.m., "My House in Umbria." 3:30 a.m., "The Hollow." March 2 at 9 p.m., "Dead Calm." March 3 at 4:10 p.m., "Soapdish." 9 p.m., "21 Grams." March 4 at 9 p.m., "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers."

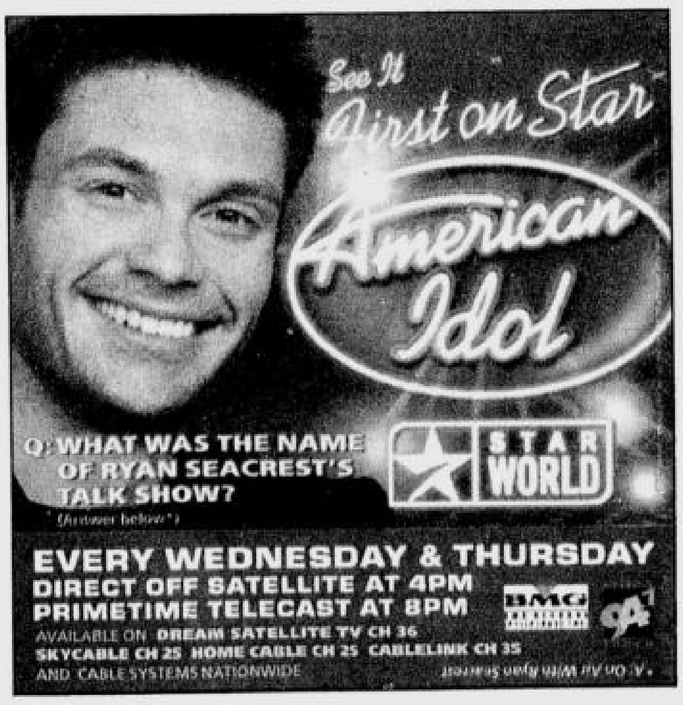
On Cinemax, March 1 at 4:30 p.m., "Funny Girl." 9 p.m., "Into Thin Air: Death on Everest." March 2 at 2:30 p.m., "A Death in the Family." 3:30 a.m., "Thoroughly Modern Millie." March 3 at 7:30 p.m., "Hollywood Confidential." March 4 at 6:30 a.m., "East of Eden." 7:30 p.m., "Flashdance."

'Mass'

NATIONAL Artist F. **Sionil Jose**'s novel, "Mass," has been adapted for the stage by **Rody Vera,** and is currently being mounted by the CCP's Tanghalang Pilipino, until March 6. Call 832-3661, local 1620.

Set during the tumultuous years before martial law, the play dramatizes the escapades of its protagonist, Pepe Samson. Pepe escapes from his village in Pangasinan and finds himself in the slums of Tondo. Disillusioned by what he sees around him, he embarks on an adventurous journey, both economic and erotic. Eventually, his life takes a surprising turn, like most Filipino youths who finally find meaning in their lives.

The play's cast includes **Yul Servo, Ronnie Lazaro, Bodgie Pascua, Lou Veloso, Madeleine Nicolas** and **Roeder Camañag.**


See It First on Star
American Idol
Q: WHAT WAS THE NAME OF RYAN SEACREST'S TALK SHOW?
(Answer below*)
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1 CONSTANTINE	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LEMONY SNICKET'S	5 INFECTION	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 CONSTANTINE 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15	1 SON OF THE MASK
2 THE AVIATOR	2 THE AVIATOR	2 CONSTANTINE	6 THE AVIATOR	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 THE AVIATOR 1:45, 5:00, 8:15, 11:30	2 LEMONY SNICKET'S
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S	3 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 CONSTANTINE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30	7 SON OF THE MASK	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 SIDEWAYS 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 INFECTION	4 SON OF THE MASK	4 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 LEMONY SNICKET'S 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30	4 CONSTANTINE
5 SON OF THE MASK				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE PHANTOM... 1:30, 4:10, 6:50 / CONSTANTINE 9:30, 12:00	5

GB1 GREENBELT 1	
1	CONSTANTINE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00
2	THE AVIATOR 11:45, 3:00, 6:15, 9:30

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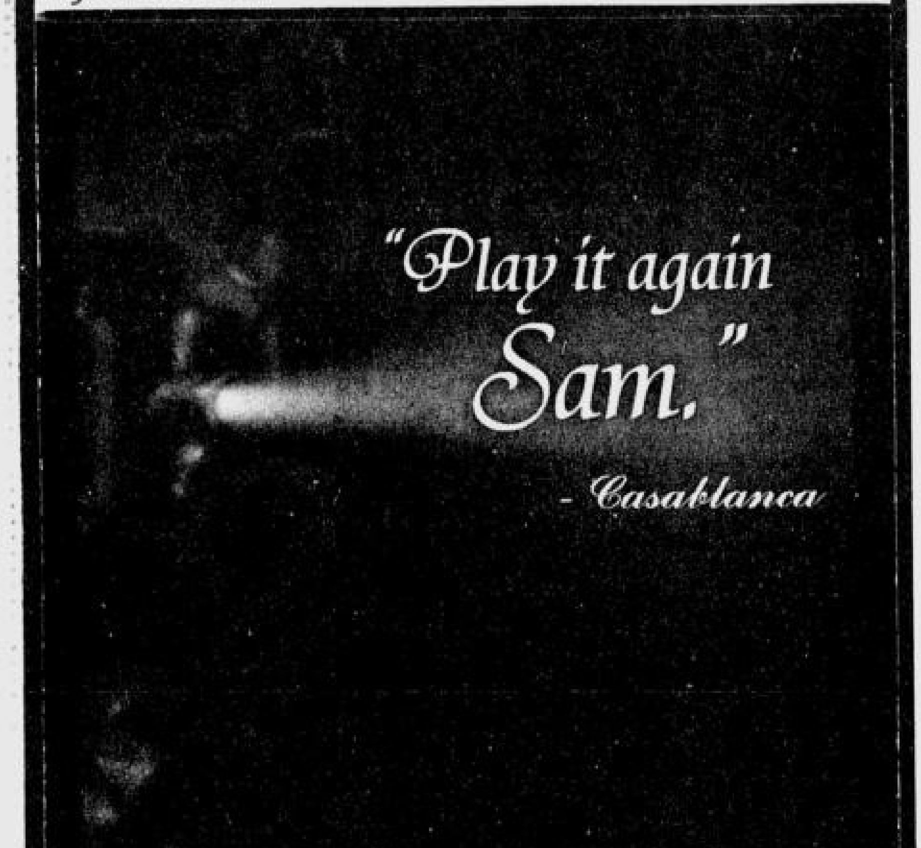

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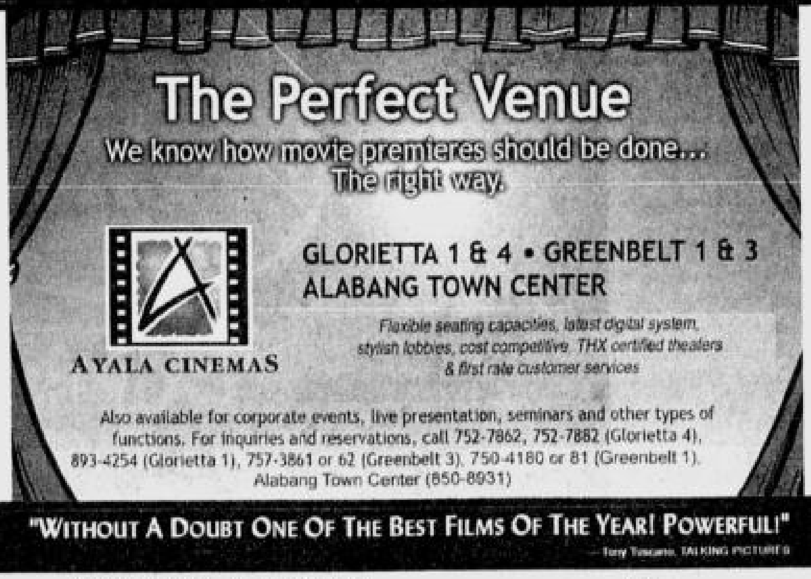

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS • THX
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
2 SON OF THE MASK 2
10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
3 CONSTANTINE
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
4 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
11:50 2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30
5 INFECTION
10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
6 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10:40 1:35 4:30 7:25 10:00
7 FOOTSTEPS
11:50 1:50 3:50 5:50 7:50 9:50
8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
10 SIDEWAYS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 CONSTANTINE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10:20 1:05 4:00 6:55 9:50
6 INFECTION
10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45
7 SON OF THE MASK 2
10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 RAY
10:40 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
12:30 3:10 6:00 9:00
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
11:20 1:45 4:05 6:30 9:00
5 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
6 INFECTION
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
7 CONSTANTINE
10:35 1:05 3:35 6:05 8:20 10:30
8 SON OF THE MASK 2
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 CONSTANTINE
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
2 SON OF THE MASK 2
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25
3 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
10:25 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25
4 INFECTION
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
6 RESERVE
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 CONSTANTINE
2 SON OF THE MASK 2
3 INFECTION
4 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MADHOUSE
2 CONSTANTINE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 BLADE TRINITY

CAINTA 240-4661

1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 INFECTION
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 CONSTANTINE

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MTRCB Rating: R-13

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MariaConchita ALONSO
Damian CHAPA
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4 RAY
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5 MADHOUSE

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2 HONEY
3 CONSTANTINE
4 INFECTION
5 LET THE LOVEBEGIN

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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 CONSTANTINE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13

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2 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 CONSTANTINE
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 INFECTION

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2 RAISE YOUR VOICE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
5 CONSTANTINE
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13

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1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 ALFIE
3 CONSTANTINE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 RACING STRIPES
6 SHALL WE DANCE

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1 CONSTANTINE
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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5 MEET THE FOCKERS
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Breaking box-office records . . .

From page A2-3

man: "We didn't make that video. *Sila mismo na mag*-lovers *ang gumawa noon.* (The lovers themselves made that video.) *Sana in*-erase *nila.* (They should have erased it.)

"We are only human. *Siyempre kahit sino makakita 'ng* video as explosive as that one *magiging cu*rious. *Kasalanan ng isa, pero lahat kami nadamay. Sa totoo lang, lahat ng nagpapa*-repair *ngayon ng* cell phone *nagtatanong kung may kopya kami ng video na yun* (Anyone who sees that explosive video would become curious. It was the fault of one shop, but we are all paying for it. Actually, people who come to have their cell phones fixed inquire if we have a copy of the video)," he said.

I got to see the controversial video. And it's unmistakably Ethel with Alex "coaching" her while he was taking the video. Why do they have to deny it?

A studio habitué said, "It's not surprising that Ethel was game to have that video taken. She usually does not spare the gory details when she talks about her sex life with Alex in public. *Kahit maraming nakakarinig wala siyang kiber* (People would overhear but she doesn't care)."

My Fair Lady

THE GILOPEZ Kabayao Foundation Inc. presents Lerner and Loewe's highly-acclaimed musical "My Fair Lady," featuring Iloilo's finest theater talents led by **Rodolfo Cabado** as Professor Higgins, **Farida Kabayao** as Eliza Doolittle, **Edgar Javison** as Col. Pickering, **Jon Jainga** as Alfred Doolittle, **Alain Opina** as Freddie Eynsford-Hill and **Elsie Flores Gancia** as Mrs. Pearce. Directed by **Joan Paulette Marie Libo-on**, the musical promises the highest levels of performance from an all-Ilonggo, 40-member cast.

It will be shown at the newly renovated Fleur de Lis Auditorium, St. Paul University Manila on Saturday, March 5, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. For inquiries, call 536-6221/Sicilienne: 0927-9313893

Reader's Corner

HELLO Dolly,

I just want to share this information with you regarding a Filipina actress who landed a big role in a critically acclaimed show here in the US. Her name is **Lisa Lapira** and she appears in "Huff," a series on cable channel Showtime.

She plays Maggie, a feisty and competent legal assistant. There's a whole story line on her and a Filipina sister who are sent back to the Philippines. She is really doing an excellent job.

Peggy Manansala-Eary
Florida, USA

(For feedback, email wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

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1 LEMONY SNICKET'S: (Series of Unfortunate Events)
12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
PG-13

2 MASK 2: SON OF THE MASK
10:40, 1:05, 3:35
PG-13

HITCH Premiere Night DREAM FM
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GP

3 CONSTANTINE
11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00
PG-13

4 AVIATOR
12:20, 3:50, 7:20, 10:50
PG-13

Breaking box-office records—and rules of decency?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

GMA Films boasts that their movie "Let the Love Begin" has broken all box-office records.

Good for them!

What the public doesn't know is that the film may have also broken some rules of ethics.

A Regal Films' insider told me that the four leading stars of "Let the Love Begin" (**Angel Locsin, Richard Gutierrez, Jennylyn Mercado** and **Mark Herras**) are all under contract with Mother Lily's home studio as far as movies are concerned.

My source said: "Mother feels slighted. She has every right to feel that way. The least they could have done was to ask her permission out of courtesy. *Natapos na ang pelikula at kumita na ng milyon* and yet *walang* due credit *si* Mother. *Madali naman siyang kausapin at lambingin. Mahal niya ang mga artista niya* (They finished the movie and it has made millions, yet they never gave credit to Mother Lily. She's an easy person to talk to. She loves her actors)."

During the movie's promo, I heard a TV host say that Mother Lily wants to shoot a film in the US with the two love teams.

Was that supposed to appease her?

Another production insider said: "GMA 7 is the better network these days. *Sana* they take care of their position and not bypass anybody just because they're on top."

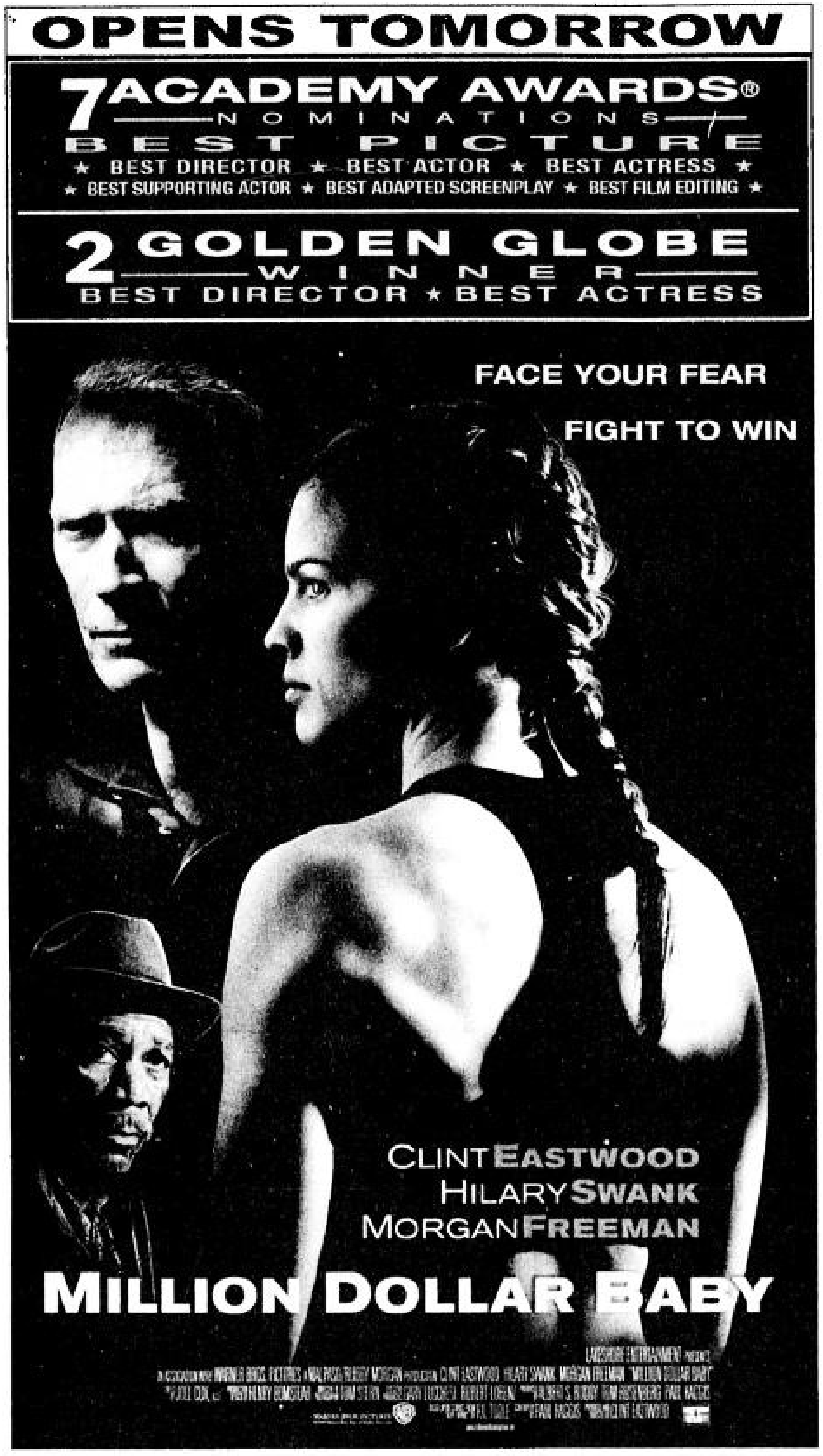
Knowing Mother Lily, she will just let things slide. If this had happened to another producer, it could be the start of a new movie, "Let the Legal Charges Begin . . ."

Alex and Ethel exposed

CELL PHONE repair shop owners in Greenhills found it ridiculous when police popped up to investigate how the sex video of **Ethel Booba** and her cager-boyfriend **Alex Crisano** spread after he had his cell phone fixed in one of the stalls there.

Said one repair-

BREAKING/ A2-2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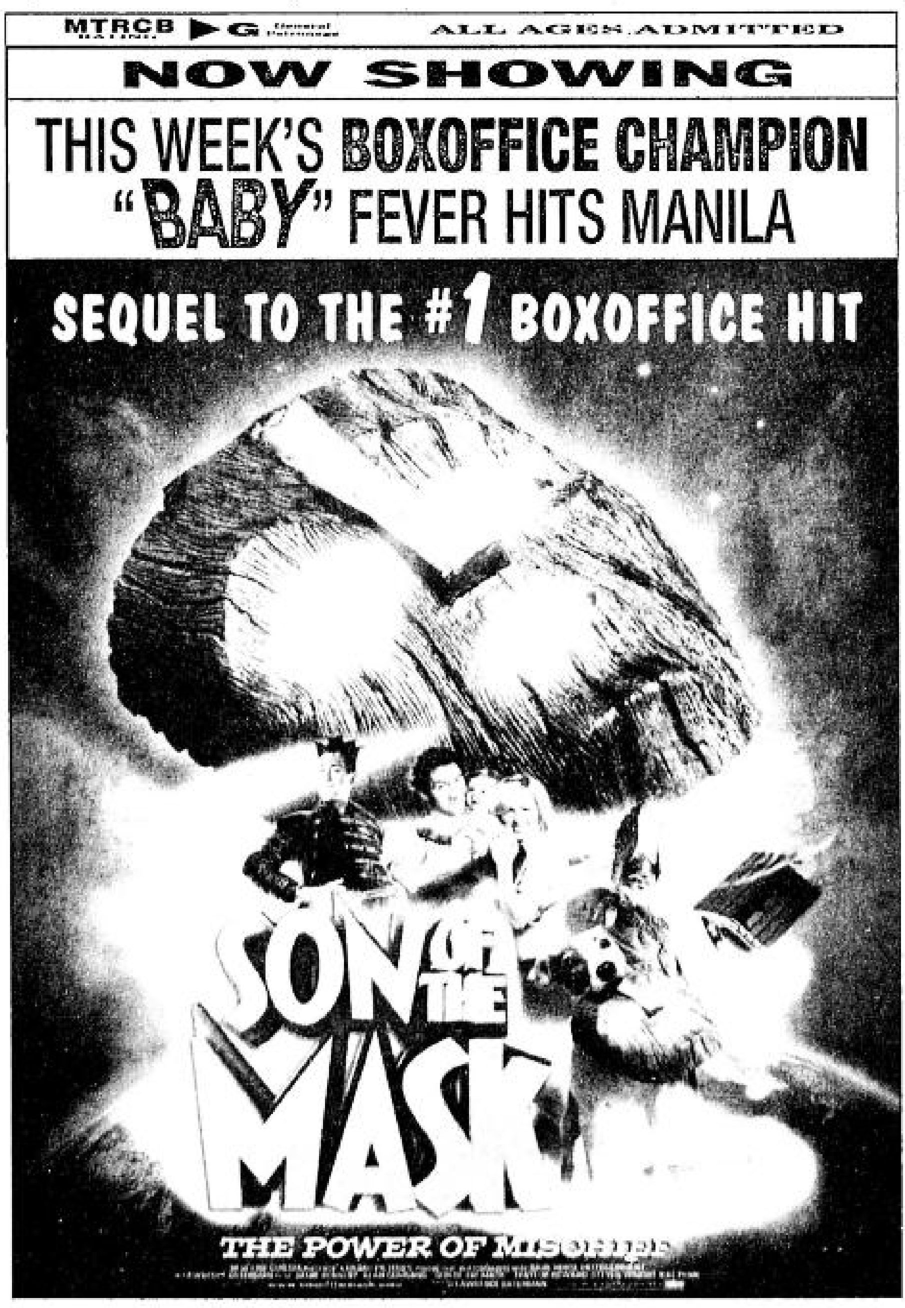
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Numb	Linkin Park	numb
Breathe	Prodigy	breathe
Hot Ride	Prodigy	hotride
Change the World	P.O.D.	changedworld
Another One Bites the Dust	Queen	anotherone
Here In My Room	incubus	hereinmyroom
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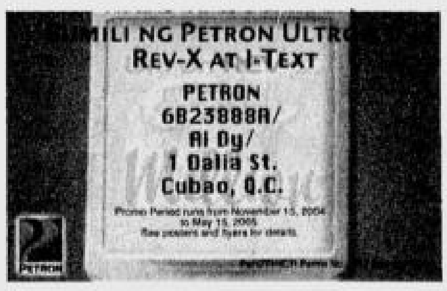
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Crude oil prices surge to new highs

By Abigail L. Ho

STILL smarting from the recent fuel price increases implemented by local oil firms during the weekend, consumers can brace for higher petroleum prices after world crude prices again skyrocketed to record highs.

The regional benchmark Dubai crude soared to $42 a barrel on Feb. 25, jacking up the February average to a high $39.70 a barrel, nearly $2 higher than the January average of $37.92 a barrel.

Eclipsing all previously set records, diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products skyrocketed to a spot price of $62.48 a barrel last Friday.

This further pushed the February average up to $55.15 a barrel from only $51.26 last month.

The price of MOPS-based unleaded gasoline likewise hit $58.20 a barrel on the same day. As a result, the Feb. 1-25 average surged to $54.01 a barrel, almost $7 higher than the January average of $47.58.

Local oil firms recently jacked up the prices of their gasoline products by 60 centavos a liter and their diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter to reflect the high costs of crude and finished products in the regional and world markets.

International prices had been on the uptrend the past weeks due to the uncertainty of whether or not the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries would further cut its production quota.

The oil cartel recently reduced its output by a million barrels a day. It would be meeting on March 16 to discuss, among others, the possibility of either maintaining or reducing its daily production.

Quoting the London-based Center for Global Studies, the Department of Energy said that should Opec decide to cut production by 500,000 barrels a day instead of the expected 1 million, the Opec basket of crude would likely surge past the $50-a-barrel mark.

The DOE added that Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali Naimi had hinted that the 2005 price band for the basket of crude—or the Opec-set price range for of oil prices in the world market—would be between $40 and $50 a barrel.

This possible new price band would be almost double the previously set price range of $22-$28 a barrel.

Despite the high costs of oil in the world market, demand had remained high, particularly in Europe and the United States, because of the extremely cold weather there.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi also stoked prices higher last week with his prediction that oil prices would stay between $40 and $50 for the rest of this year, provoking criticism from consuming nations that soaring energy bills would damage economic growth.

But Opec talk of a possible production cut for the second quarter after the northern hemisphere winter appears to be cooling.

Qatar, the smallest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, said on Sunday that prices were high and Opec might leave production limits at the current 27 million barrels a day (bpd) when ministers meet in Iran on March 16.

"If the price continues as it is, I don't believe we will need to cut further," Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah al-Attiyah said.

"$40-$50 is on the high side and we have to be very careful," Attiyah said, adding that $$30-$40 is reasonable.

Venezuela and Indonesia have come out in favor of leaving Opec formal output limits unchanged next month. *With a report from Reuters*

91-day T-bill rate eases to 6.691%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BELLWETHER 91-day treasury bill rate continued to decline, shedding two basis points to 6.691 percent as the government's lingering fiscal issues resulted in the capital market's preference for the shortest-term tenor.

Traders said the local capital market was still very liquid, but investors were starting to show some concern over the government's ability to improve its fiscal situation due to the slow progress of the plan to raise the value-added tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

This was reflected during the fortnightly auction for treasury bills yesterday when the 182- and 364-day debt instruments fetched higher rates of 7.73 percent and 8.671 percent, respectively. The new rate for the six-month government security was 12.7 basis points higher than the 7.603 percent recorded two weeks ago, while the new 364-day T-bill rate was 8 basis points higher than the previous level. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

The rise in the yield of the six-month and one-year debt notes followed consecutive declines in the rates of short-term government securities in the three previous auctions.

"The market is still very cautious because of uncertainties over fiscal matters, especially since Congress still has not passed the VAT-hike proposal," said Pam Colocado, fund manager at Bank of the Philippine Islands.

While the Lower House has approved the VAT increase, the revenue-raising measure is facing uncertainty of getting the nod of the Senate.

The Bureau of Treasury said the upward movement in the rates of the six-month and one-year debt instruments should not be taken with too much concern, stressing it was normal considering the steep declines that the rates posted in the past.

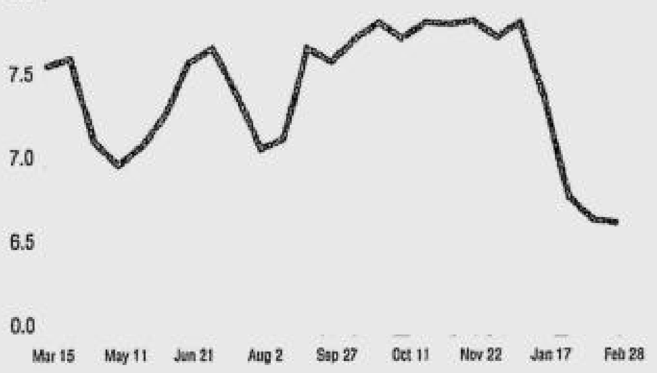
"The prices are not so bad; in fact they are still low," outgoing National Treasurer Norma Lasala said in a press briefing after the auctions. She said the latest rates for the 182- and 364-day government securities were "just right," explaining that the maturity dates of the two were "essentially a period the market is not very keen on."

Lasala noted the high volume of bids, which showed a strong appetite for government securities. All maturities were oversubscribed by the market.

Bids for the 91-day paper reached P6.69 billion, compared with the government's offering of P4.5 billion. Tenders for the 182-day bills stood at P4.64 billion compared with the P4-billion offering, while bids for the 364-day debt instrument reached P5.88 billion as against the offering of only P3.5 billion.

The Treasury's auction committee raised its intended borrowings for the three-month and one-year bills, but accepted only P3.54 billion worth of bids for the 182-day government security.

91-DAY TREASURY BILL RATES
March 15, 2004 to Feb 28, 2005



FREEPORT STATUS

Bataan ecozone lures investors

By Ronnel W. Domingo

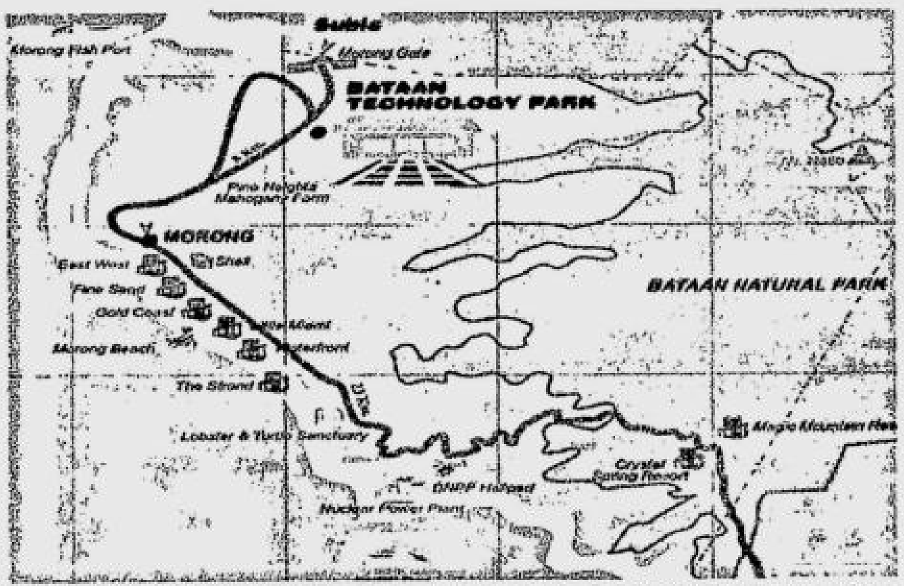
INVESTORS have put their sights on the Bataan Technology Park Inc. as a possible location for their planned businesses after Malacañang declared it a freeport zone, according to the chief of the state agency.

BTPI president Ofelia V. Bulaong said in a press briefing that the agency's board of directors were deliberating on about 60 applications.

"When the new board assumed office last year, there were only two locators," Bulaong said. "So far, we have approved another project."

EO 381, which was signed on Oct. 26, 2004, placed BPTI under the jurisdiction of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and renamed it SBMA-Bataan.

"But the order would have to be (revised) because the Bases Conversion Development Authority owns BTPI's 365 hectares of land," Bulaong said. "Still, it would adopt the new name as a matter of marketing the export processing zone while stressing its freeport status."



At the same time, she said Australian construction firm Leighton Contractors (Philippines) Inc. has submitted an unsolicited proposal to develop BTPI's infrastructure system.

Bulaong said Leighton was considering

BATAAN/ B4

Gov't names oil deregulation review panel

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy has formally recommended the establishment of a five-person independent panel to review RA 8479 or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Law.

This is in fulfillment of the DOE's commitment last year to have the seven-year-old law reviewed for possible amendment.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said that while the Oil Deregulation Law had achieved quite a lot for the downstream oil industry over the past seven years, some sectors had been pushing for its review.

"Thus, we have commissioned a five-man panel to review the seven-year old law on how it can be improved, if (ever), to balance the interest of the industry and the consumers," he said in a statement yesterday.

"The review will also provide new direction on what roles and powers should be given to the DOE in light of the new developments in the oil market," he added.

The five-person panel would be headed by former Energy Regulatory Commissioner Carlos Alindada, who also used to chair auditing firm SGV and Co.

The other four members of the panel are University of Asia and the Pacific College of Economics dean Peter Lee Yu, Confederation of Land Transportation Organization of the Philippines secretary general Alberto Suansing, Petroleum Dealers Association of the Philippines president Merceditas Garcia, and former director of the defunct Petroleum Board Joey Leviste.

Perez said the review panel would be given 90 days to conduct a series of consultations with various industry stakeholders to enable them to come up with recommendations on how the existing law could be improved.

At the end of the 90-day period, he said the panel's evaluation of the law as well as its recommendations would be submitted to the DOE.

Asked during in an interview over dzMM yesterday morning on what the current law lacked, Perez said it did not give the DOE enforcement powers.

For example, he explained that if the DOE found a specific gasoline station in violation of any consumer protection laws with regard to selling fuels, it could not just have the service station's license revoked.

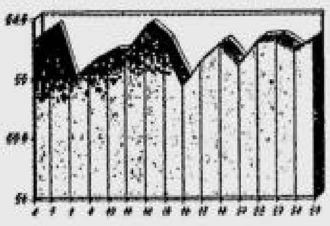
The DOE would have to go through the local government where the gasoline station is located to ask that its license be revoked, he said.

Also, if the DOE caught cooking gas dealers selling substandard liquefied petroleum gas cylinders, he said sanctions could not be immediately imposed as the DOE would have to go through the Department of Trade and Industry to do this. *Abigail L. Ho*

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



FEBRUARY

₱ 54.67 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2005

¥ 104.58 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2005

GOLD: $ 433.40-433.90
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 24, 2005

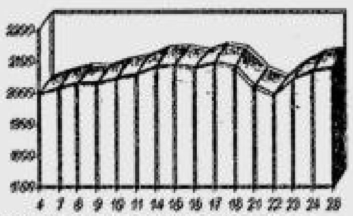
February 28, 2005

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.754716981	1	54.717
Japan	Yen	0.007174	0.009506	0.5201
United Kingdom	Pound	1.44883	1.9197	105.0402
Hongkong	Dollar	0.096764	0.128212	7.0154
Switzerland	Franc	0.649554	0.860659	47.0927
Canada	Dollar	0.609725	0.807885	44.205
Singapore	Dollar	0.462875	0.613309	33.5584
Australia	Dollar	0.592167	0.784621	42.9321
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.001955	2.65259	145.1418
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201253	0.26666	14.5908
Brunei	Dollar	0.46146	0.611434	33.4558
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.01968	0.026076	1.4268
UAE	Dirham	0.205488	0.272272	14.8979
Euro	Euro	1	1.325	72.5
Argentina	Peso	0.257144	0.340716	18.643
Brazil	REAL	0.287577	0.381039-	20.8493
Denmark	Kroner	0.134382	0.178056	9.7427
India	Rupee	0.017306	0.022931	1.2547
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198636	0.263193	14.4011
Mexico	New Peso	0.068008	0.09011	4.9305
New Zealand	Dollar	0.543705	0.720409	39.4186
Norway	Kroner	0.121191	0.160578	8.7863
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012723	0.016858	0.9224
South Africa	Rand	0.12942	0.171482	9.383
Korea	Won	0.000749	0.000992	0.0543
Sweden	Kroner	0.110322	0.146177	7.9984
Syria	Pound	0.014539	0.019264	1.0541
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024217	0.032087	1.7557
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000394	0.000522	0.0286

STOCK MARKET

Shares end higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES closed higher yesterday as investors picked up blue chips on a positive outlook for fiscal reforms and pent-up demand after a long weekend.

But traders said the market's climb was bound to slow in the coming days as new initial public offerings siphon off some liquidity from the bourse.

"There was bargain-hunting interest, but it was very selective," Accord Capital Equities analyst Lawrence de Leon said.

The market underwent a deep technical correction before bargain-hunters re-entered the market on Wednesday and Thursday last week, dealers said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 6.8 points, or 0.3 percent, at 2,079.99, after advancing 30.41 points Thursday. Local markets were closed for a public holiday Friday.

Turnover reached 5.30 billion shares worth P2.21 billion. Gainers beat losers 57 to 37, with 52 stocks unchanged.

The broader All Shares Index declined 9.10 points to close at 1,197.86 after a 0.96-point decline Thursday.

Except for the oil subindex, all other sectoral indicators finished higher. *AP, AFP*

Cruz takes over as Treasury head

NEWLY Appointed National Treasurer Omar Cruz was been sworn in yesterday afternoon amid the ongoing protest of officials and employees of the Bureau of Treasury against third-party custodianship, which Cruz, a former banker, is expected to espouse.

Cruz, who assumes his new post effective today, told reporters that his first task would be to conduct a dialogue with people from the Treasury to explain to them the benefits of putting in place a system of having third-party custodians for debt instruments.

"The first order of the day is to clear out the seeming confusion in the office. My sense is that there is a great deal of miscommunication and misunderstanding over the issue," Cruz said in an interview with reporters after his oath-taking.

Cruz said that having worked in the banking industry, he has personal experience in doing custodianship of debt securities and its advantages. "I can talk based on experience. I think I can explain it to them in a practical way," he said.

Cruz has had 27 years of work experience in treasury, securities trading, risk management, commercial and investment banking and business economic research.

An ex-Citibanker, he was the chief finance officer of the University of Asia and the Pacific and the director and vice president of the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines before assuming the highest post at the Treasury.

Under the third-party custodianship being required by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, traded debt securities—both issued by the government and private companies—shall be registered and safe-kept by BSP accredited third-party custodians. Banks or non-bank financial institutions may act as custodians.

People from the Treasury, led by former National Treasurer Norma Lasala, have expressed

CRUZ/ B4

INTEREST RATES

February 28, 2005-MART1

Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 28-Feb-04	MART 1 24-Feb-04
1 Month	6.7538	6.7767
3 Months	6.9327	6.9433
6 Months	7.7982	7.71
1 Year	8.9268	8.9321
2 Years	9.9429	9.9233
3 Years	10.62	10.635
4 Years	11.1589	11.1183
5 Years	11.4446	11.4683
7 Years	12.1483	12.1667
10 Years	12.4623	12.475
20 Years	13.025	13.0161
25 Years	13.9983	13.9732

’04 RP furniture exports stay flat at $278M

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE furniture exports posted a flat growth rate at $278 million in 2004, according to the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP).

But the industry group remained upbeat, expecting "modest gains, more sales, and stable employment and business opportunities" for this year.

Nick de Lange, CFIP president, said in a statement that the group's members were "raring to expand, push the Philippine economy forward and be of help to as many entrepreneurs and workers."

The CFIP yesterday kicked off the four-day Philippines International Furniture Show at the World Trade Center and the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City.

According to CFIP, the annual trade show usually attracts about 4,000 visitors, about half of whom are foreign importers, wholesalers, distributors, traders and their agents.

The group said the country maintained a top position among its Asean counterparts in terms of product design and craftsmanship.

There are about 15,000 furniture firms, mostly small and medium-scale, in the country, the CFIP said, citing official statistics.

Pieces of furniture are exported to the United States, Japan, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and Australia.

Speaking during the opening of the trade show yesterday, Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said the country was one of the top manufacturers of furniture and home accessories in the world.

"The main factor for this is (the local industry's) talent for innovation," Santos said. "The Philippines is now seen as an international driver for trends and style in furniture."

The Department of Trade and Industry estimates that local furniture makers employ 500,000 direct workers, 300,000 indirect workers and about a million others in its subcontracting network.

Most Filipino furniture-makers hold shop in Metro Manila, Cebu and Pampanga.

"With sufficient government support and incentives, we hope to improve on our current standing and contribute more," De Lange said.

Industry figures show that with export earnings reaching $244.778 million in the first 10 months of 2004, wood furniture got the lion's share at $107.491 million, followed by rattan furniture with $81 million.

Exports of metal furnishings reached $23.917 million; furniture parts, $17.215 million; stone furniture, $6.028-million; bamboo furniture and furniture of other materials, $7.788-million; and plastic and buri furniture, $1.335-million.

Power of the pin

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

JUST when everybody thought it was safe to ride the bus on Edsa again, along came the House of Representatives, adopting the idea of this cute administration to kill us slowly.

When nobody was looking, the House quickly approved the administration bill that sought to pin us down with the imposition of VAT on—of all things—electricity.

Now that's the value added tax, which is only 10 percent, but which may go up to 12 percent soon, if this cute administration of Gloriaetta will have its way.

Guess who must shoulder the tax! Hint: not the terrorists.

Now, to make our lives a bit less miserable, the House had this bright idea to burden us with the electricity VAT gradually.

Under the House version, the VAT on power will be 4 percent in the first year, 6 percent in the second, 8 percent in the third, and finally 12 percent in the fourth.

Why, thank you, kind madams and sirs. At least in the hands of this cute administration of Gloriaetta, we die a slow death. Terrorists just kill us right away.

* * *

THEY are still fighting over the VAT bill in the Senate. Based on news reports, several senators have already pledged the tax measure to Malacañang.

As we all know, except perhaps a couple of senators, almost all types of business have the so-called "input" VAT, which they can deduct from the actual VAT payment. There is no such a thing in power generation.

Thus, Napocor and the so-called IPP, or independent power producers, must pay the entire 10 or 12 percent.

It becomes a pure tax, in other words, and the whole of it—not just half or a third, but the WHOLE of it—will immediately show in our electric bills.

For, despite the view of a couple of lawmakers that the proposed VAT law can actually force the power producers to shoulder the new tax, it remains just that—a view.

In reality, however, the users of electricity must pay for it, one way or another. VAT is a tax on users, right? Do we hear any more bright idea, boss?

* * *

AS a product, electricity has been exempted from VAT ever since the administration of Tita Cory adopted the system in 1988.

The reasoning then was clear: Imposing the VAT on electricity would not only burden consumers, it would wreck havoc on the economy.

Today, perhaps thinking that we have become the richest country in the world, this cute administration wants to take away the exemption.

Sure, this cute administration already boasted at one time that it had succeeded where others before it had failed. Gloriaetta brought down the power rates.

She only did it through some strange miracle called "subsidy." As everybody knows, subsidy is like drugs. It is a short-term fix, and it kills you in the end.

And so today, even with the subsidy and all, we still have the second highest power rates in Asia, next only to Japan's, which does not exactly spell a bright future for us.

* * *

HERE is a snapshot of the VAT effect on the consumer.

Electric cooperatives outside Metro Manila, or those belonging to the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, or the APEC, have around six million household members.

With the VAT, all those families will have to pay 44 centavos more per kilowatthour. Today, without the VAT, their rates are between P4 and P8 per kilowatthour.

Here in Metro Manila, which belongs to the Meralco franchise, it is estimated that the VAT will jack up the electricity rate by about 60 centavos per kilowatthour.

But in the Meralco franchise areas, due to such treats as national and local government franchise taxes, we actually pay more for power. The rates here are about P8.75 per kilowatthour.

See that? Here in Metro Manila, we already pay for higher power rates, and then we even have to pay a higher VAT.

Unfortunately, not everybody in the metropolis can afford the rate increase from the VAT. Gosh, there's even a bigger concentration of the poor here than elsewhere in the country.

* * *

LET us just force the IPPs and Napocor to absorb the VAT, according to some lawmakers. Right away, boss!

It's just that, based on the prevailing legal thinking on the VAT, it is really a "pass through" tax.

Down here in my barangay, "pass through" simply means that whatever VAT rate the government imposes on the IPPs and Napocor, the latter will simply charge it to us.

But the lawmakers insist that they can prohibit such a VAT assist-pass in the VAT law itself, even citing Supreme Court rulings in the United States.

Oh yeah? It turns out that one only state in the United States actually has a Supreme Court ruling on VAT that says it is a ... well, a "pass through" tax.

If the law forces the IPPs and Napocor to absorb the VAT, I'm afraid that the court cases will start flying all over the place. It's not exactly good for our future either.

* * *

AS I have been saying before I was erotically interrupted, any mess-up in the power sector can delay the privatization of Napocor.

That is the big ticket in the agenda of this cute administration, by the way, its supposed legacy to the nation.

Easily Napocor can fetch P250 to P300 billion. It is the kind of cash that the government needs to jumpstart the economy by going fullblast into infrastructure, for instance.

Not only that, ridding itself of Napocor will free the government from yearly subsidies of P60 to P80 billion to the state-owned power company.

Now, if we are lucky, and the BIR shapes up in the honesty front, the VAT on power is expected to yield only about P15 billion a year. You do the math.

* * *

LIKE it or not, Napocor remains a big thorn in the fiscal side of this cute administration.

In fact, some congressmen, such as Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella of Camarines Sur, want the government to do something about the power rates so the true costs will be reflected. You know, not the subsidized rates.

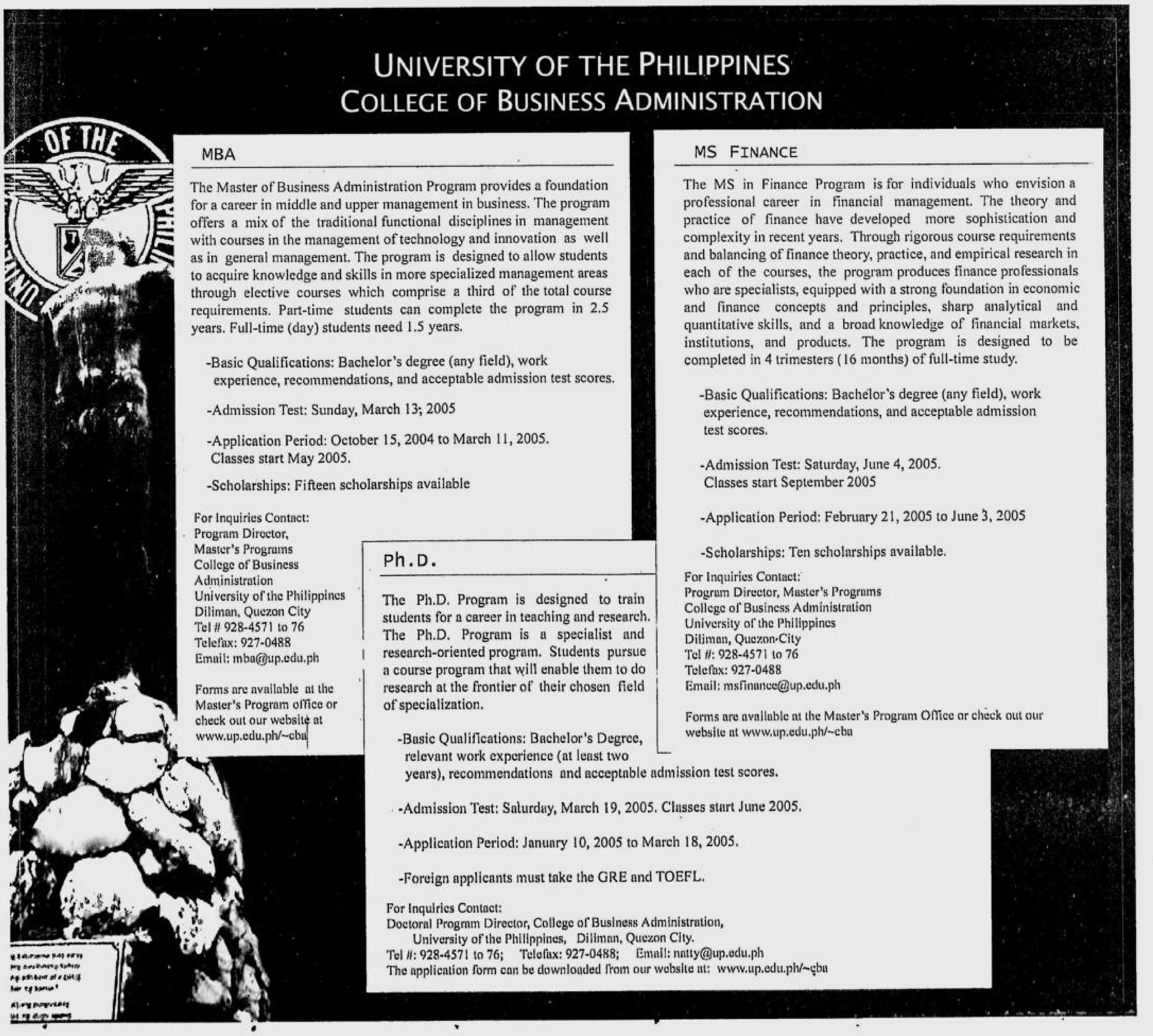
But that will raise the power rates, right? Well, their thinking is, so does the imposition of the VAT.

If we are going to raise the rates, anyway, they prefer that we raise them to lessen the government subsidy.

It has a bigger impact on the fiscal problem than the VAT imposition.

It also creates long term prospects in the power business. Remember, we are facing another power shortage come 2008.

Good heavens, that's only three years from now. If nobody invests in power generation, we may once again go to the dogs ... or terrorist training camps!



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BSP sees February inflation rate at 8.3-8.8%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INFLATION rate in February likely remained at a range of 8.3-8.8 percent largely due to the continued increase in global crude oil prices, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

In January, the inflation rate eased to 8.4 percent from 8.6 percent in December.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the single biggest factor affecting the inflation estimate for February was the continuing pressure from oil prices.

BSP Assistant Governor Diwa Guinigundo explained that Dubai crude prices averaged at $40 per barrel last month, or higher than the assumption of $38.45 per barrel.

He said other factors that could affect consumer prices—such as economic growth, domestic liquidity and budget deficit—were so far within assumed levels.

The BSP's forecasts use the updated 2000 consumer price index adopted by the National Statistics Office.

The central bank expects that supply-side factors, particularly the volatility of global oil prices, would continue to influence the central bank's inflation outlook.

However, the BSP's medium-term outlook for inflation was unchanged. It sees the inflation rate to decline to below 5 percent by the end of the year.

In the meantime, the revised 2005 inflation target of 5-6 percent is still likely to be exceeded as the full impact of supply-side factors sets in, but the BSP maintains that the average inflation in 2006 will likely fall within the target range of 4-5 percent.

"This outlook is entirely in accordance with past experience concerning episodes of food- or oil-driven supply-side inflation rate increases in the Philippines, during which headline inflation tended to promptly revert to manageable levels after a brief upsurge," the BSP said in its statement on the January inflation.

The BSP uses an inflation-targeting approach in setting monetary policy. In its most recent assessment, the Monetary Board noted that supply-side pressures could still be best mitigated by non-monetary policy measures such as the timely importation, distribution and delivery of certain commodities.

P1.3-B HONDA MOTORCYCLE PLANT
President Macapagal-Arroyo leads government and Honda officials in a groundbreaking ceremony that signals the start of the construction of Honda Philippines Inc.'s new P1.3-billion motorcycle plant at the 1st Philippine Industrial Park in Tanauan City, Batangas. With the President are (from left) Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez, Asian Honda Motor Co. Ltd chief operating officer Satoshi Toshida, HPI president and general manager Yasuhiro Oyama, and Trade Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez.
The new plant aims to meet the growing demand for motorcycles and to ensure the company's leadership in the industry. The plant is expected to produce 500,000 motorcycles yearly, which can be increased to 1 million units a year.

Hike in Sun's 24/7 rate seen

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN Cellular is planning to raise its rate for the 24/7 plan for unlimited, within-network voice and text to P350 per month from P250, a senior official of the National Telecommunications Commission said.

Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc., which uses Sun Cellular as its trade name, submitted to the NTC a rate hike petition late last year. The petition, however, has yet to be approved.

Since October 2004, Sun Cellular has been offering its buffet call and text rate within the network for P250 for 30 days and P100 for 10 days on top of existing subscription plans. The unlimited plan boosted Sun Cellular's subscriber base to 1.5 million as of January from only 700,000 as of end-September 2004.

Digitel senior vice president William Pamintuan said Sun Cellular might launch new plans soon. He, however, refused to elaborate on this but said the new campaign would likely focus on providing unlimited text for varying periods, like one week or one month.

"Sun Cellular has informed the NTC through a letter that it wanted to increase the monthly rate of 24/7 to P350 per month. The rate scheme is similar to the existing 24/7 except that the additional fee will go up," said NTC head of common carrier division Edgardo Cabarios.

In the meantime, Globe Telecom Inc.'s Touch Mobile brand will offer a similar promo for P300 for unlimited voice and text for 30 days and P50 for unlimited text for five days on top of current plans.

"We will formally launch the campaign soon . We need some time to finalize the campaign," said Jones Campos, head of Globe public relations department. He assured Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers of continued quality service even during the 30-day promo limited to Touch Mobile customers only.

"Maybe, they need to recoup its investments in the network. They can not always offer unlimited services at low rates. They need to recover their costs too," said an NTC official on Sun Cellular's rate hike petition.

Competitors claimed that the Gokongwei-owned mobile phone operator was failing the NTC's service performance benchmarks.

Pilipino Telephone Corp. claimed that out of 100 calls, Sun Cellular connects successfully only 38 calls on the first attempt. Piltel said Sun Cellular also cuts 24/7 calls after 15 minutes.

Sun Cellular's network of 1,300 cellular sites is deemed inadequate for the volume it is handling. The Gokongwei-owned company, for its part, said it would spend $200 million to increase its network to 2,000 sites this year. This will enable the company to accommodate six million subscribers.

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PHILIPPINE EQUITY	Mostly Equities	Risk Taker	20.16%	39.84%	68.03%

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What do you make of VAT?

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

MY 7-YEAR old daughter achieved instant fame by composing a simple poem about her Grade 2 teacher:

We have a lovely teacher and
Her name is teacher Cel.
All the kids adore her
'Cause she teaches us so well.

Her ambition is to write for the Junior INQUIRER when she is old enough.

At 9, I remember composing a very long poem about the war and I even remember the first 3 verses. When I was a teenager, I used to write mushy love letters and Valentine cards for my classmates. During the Gulf War, I wrote a very long poem that was published in newspapers in 8 different countries including the Philippines. It is all in my unpublished book of poetry, "From bad to verse," obtainable in all Iraqi bookstores. I have just won an Oscar for the worst pun award but I don't want to swank about it.

My neighbor is a dyslexic Satanist. He believes in the drivel. He went to see his proctologist, Dr. Goldfinger. If you think that's strange, wait till you hear the names of the other doctors. His cardiologist is Art Murmur, his brain doctor, Sarah Bellum, his pulmonary specialist, Wun Lung, and his dentist, Hal E. Tosis. I asked him if he believed in an afterlife. He said, "Why not? There's an afterbirth."

We all hope that the Pope will recover but naturally the cardinals are discussing his successor. One newspaper suggested that it might be an African. I hope it is not Whoopi Goldberg.

* * *

WISH I did not read what the politicians say ecause it makes me confused. Sen. Recto aid that he will not agree to a 12-percent VAT. Next day, the newspapers said there might be a compromise with the House. In any event, hey are going to debate it for another 2 weeks, and hope to finish before Holy Week. They are also reported to have said that the emaining 5 bills are unnecessary. Unfortunately, 90 percent of politicians give the other 10 percent a bad name.

Then take the case of San Miguel's rights issue. On Thursday, the President said the ights issue would be taken up to protect the government's stake but next day, Cesar Purisima said the State did not have the money, which would be better used for infrastructure. (I agree). Next day, the President reiterated that she would borrow the money from a state-owned corporation to take up the rights. FLIP FLOP.

At the moment, foreign brokers are worried about the long-term future of the United States, which has a large budget deficit, a huge trade deficit, an unending war in Iraq, problems with the cost of Medicare and the ability to pay the pensions of the baby boomers. This is why the dollar keeps depreciating and has fallen nearly 50 percent against the euro. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, two of the richest and most successful men, confessed that they have sold short the dollar in a big way because they see a further decline. But no matter how far it falls, it does little good as the Chinese yuan falls with it.

So overseas investors have decided unanimously that the best area in which to invest is Asia. It is the manufacturing hub of the world and more and more services and jobs are being outsourced almost daily. As a result, money is being poured into Thailand, South Korea and Vietnam and just a trickle into the Philippines. But even this trickle of $4 million a day is enough to push our tiny market to new highs.

But foreign investors do follow what is going on here as can be shown by the fact that Moody's downgraded us by two notches. If the lawmakers continue to hamper economic recovery by refusing to pass or watering down tax-raising bills, the time will come when foreigners will cry "enough" and the hot money flowing in will flow out even faster. If that happens, our situation will become precarious.

Since writing this article, I have just heard that Sen. Recto has stated that a tax-raising bill will be passed before March 18, but it will be a compromise bill. It will not raise VAT to 12 percent as the President has requested, but it will contain many changes that will increase revenue by widening the tax base. The following proposals will remove the VAT-exempt status of the following:

1) The sale or importation of coal, natural gas and petroleum products—including raw materials of petroleum products.

2) Importation of passenger and cargo vessels of more than 5,000 tons.

3) Sale, importation, printing or publication of books, newspapers, magazines and bulletins.

4) Sales by electric cooperatives, non-agricultural, non-electric and non-credit cooperatives.

5) Services rendered by lawyers and doctors (assuming they issue receipts).

To minimize the impact of the VAT on fuel prices the Senate panel would lower the excise tax. They would also remove the VAT exemptions on the sale or importation of non-food agricultural products.

They would impose a 10-percent VAT on cockpits, cabarets, drinking clubs, boxing exhibitions, jai-alai and professional basketball. Also water and air transport of passengers and overseas communications. It will cut from 8 percent to 2 percent the transitional input tax credits on beginning inventory of goods, materials and supplies.

They also intend to raise corporation tax from 32 percent to 35 percent and cut individual income tax. We must wait and see how much this will raise and whether it will satisfy the government and foreign investors.

GLOBE Touch Mobile has decided to go into direct competition with SUN CELLULAR by issuing a P300 monthly card that will allow 24/7 calls and text. DIGITEL will undoubtedly suffer as GLOBE has more cell sites but GLOBE is certain to lose revenue as well. The public will gain but I am afraid these two telecom companies will lose out. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Manila Water sets IPO price at ₱6.50/share

y Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AST Zone water distributor Mani- Water Co. Inc. (MWCI) of the yala Group has set its final offer rice for its public offering this onth at P6.50 a share, the company said in a disclosure yesterday.

Sources said MWCI would of- a total of 823 million shares nd raise more than P5 billion at e final offer price.

Of the total offered shares, 45.33 million shares will constiute the initial public offering.

Upon closing of the offering on arch 18, MWCI and certain sellg shareholders are expected to ise approximately $88.5 milon.

In addition, if the international nderwriter exercises the over-altment option to purchase an addinal 78.49 million shares, it would crease the total offering proceeds approximately $97.8 million. ources said the international offerg drew significant investor inter- with the final demand booked at ore than $900 million, or about 5 times oversubscribed.

Sources added that more than 20 investors from all over the orld placed orders. UBS is the sole ternational underwriter and ookrunner for the international ofring. BPI Capital Corp. is the issue anager and domestic lead underriter for the domestic offering.

MWCI president Antonio T. quino noted that "the strong demand from the investment community is encouraging and we feel this is a validation of our efforts to turn around the company over the past seven years as we dramatically improved MWC's operational efficiencies and financial position."

The IPO is the first international public offer by a Philippine issuer since 1997.

"We are delighted with the positive feedback and strong interest we received from both domestic and international investors," said Manila Water chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

"This is not only a sign of renewed investor interest in the Philippine market but is also indicative of their confidence in the government's initiatives to improve the country's basic infrastructure and to institute fiscal reforms that will lead to a more conducive investment climate for the country," he added.

MWCI went on an international roadshow last month in Asia, Europe and the United States to raise funds from the sale of shares to the public.

At an offer price of P5 a share, the company may raise roughly P4.88 billion, which will be used for capital expenditures and concession fee payments of P1 billion that, in turn, will be used by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to repay its loans.

Bataan ecozone . . .

From page A1

build-operate-transfer projects to put up sea port facilities, roads and a water system at BTPI.

"Based on a study made by a Japanese agency, a total of $200 million is needed to develop the needed infrastructure at BTPI," she said.

Last November, Bulaong announced that it has signed a three-year deal with Taiwan-based Cosmos Biotechnology Co. Ltd. on a $3-million (about P168 million) deal under which the firm would lease an initial 5 hectares at BTPI's agri-aqua industrial park in the Morong Special Economic Zone.

The deal also provides that Cosmos Biotech can use up to 80 hectares for growing vegetables such as mushroom, tomato, papaya and other medicinal herbs for export to Asia, Japan and Europe.

The project, which was expected to create 50 jobs, would entail land development and construction of structures and facilities for storage, drying, processing and warehousing.

BTPI's other two locators are organic farming firm Barnston Herbs International Inc. and fishing vessel maker Hokei Subic Corp.

Cruz takes over . . .

From page B1

strong opposition against third-party custodians. They said the Treasury, which is tasked to manage the national government's debts, had the mandate to act as custodian of government securities.

Lasala said that having third-party custodians would result in a much higher domestic borrowing cost for the fiscally troubled government. She explained that custodians, coming from the private sector, were expected to impose various fees and service charges on investors, who would then recover the additional cost by pushing up interest rates on government securities. *Michelle V. Remo*

DISCLOSURES

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 27 at 2 p.m. at Rizal Ballroom A, 2/F Makati Shangri-La, Ayala Ave. corner Makati Ave., Makati City.

* * *

BANCO de Oro appointed Antonio Pacis corporate secretary, subject to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas confirmation.

* * *

BANKARD Inc. accepted the resignation of independent director Armando Medina, effective Feb. 24. Paul Leopando was elected to replace him.

* * *

METRO Pacific Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29. Record date is March 30.

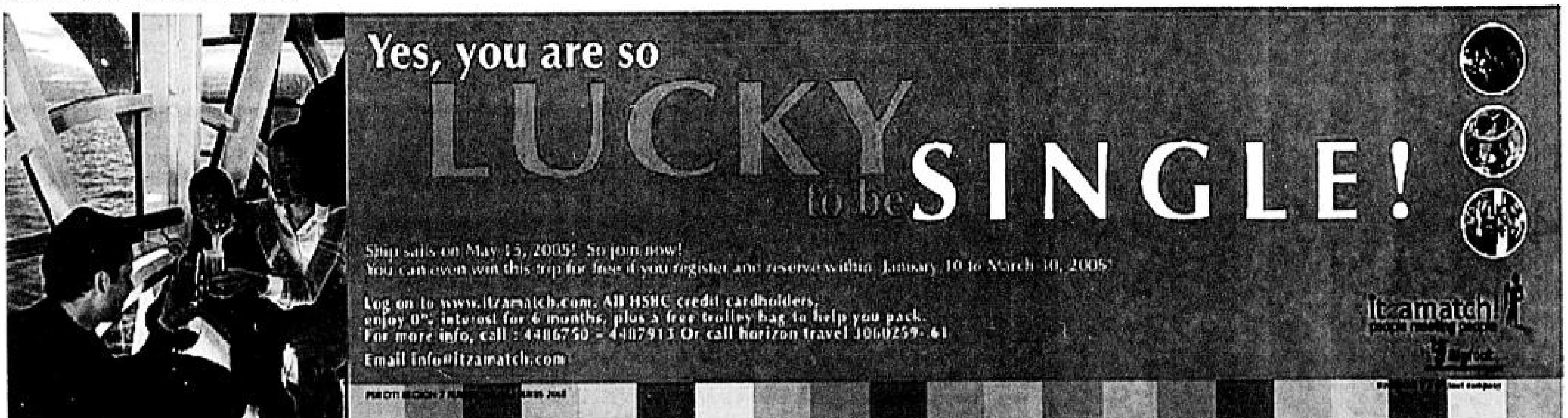
* * *

ABOITIZ Transport System Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29. Record date is March 15. ***Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 28, 2005)

SSTOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	29.5	30	29.5	30	104,900
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	58	58	57	58	1,554,300
China Banking Corp.	685	690	685	690	750
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48.5	48	48.5	106,200
Export And Ind. Bank Inc.	0.87	0.95	0.87	0.9	13,310,000
International Exch. Bank	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.5	375,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38	38	37	37.5	1,679,600
Philippine National Bank	33.5	34	32	32	66,900
Phil. Savings Bank	33	33	33	33	100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	32	32	31.5	31.5	25,800
Union Bank Of The Phil.	29	29	28.5	28.5	10,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	260	260	260	260	45,150
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2450	2450	2450	280
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.14	2.16	2.12	2.14	220,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	130	135	130	135	5,730
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1755	1755	1740	1740	270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	17,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.5	13,954,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	4	4.2	4	4.2	21,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	930	935	930	935	582,210
Ipeople Inc.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.85	139,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.06	19,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0775	0.0775	0.07	0.07	231,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	110,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	7,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.6	9,913,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	21,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1380	1380	1375	1380	57,810
Ivantage Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	2,650,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.026	0.022	0.026	2,163,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.75	19.25	18.5	19	491,100
Manila Electric Co. B	28.5	31	28.5	31	5,541,200
Petron Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.95	7,206,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	30,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	26,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8	8.2	8	8.2	1,226,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.54	140,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.56	1,950,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.25	4.65	4.25	4.55	14,719,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	104,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.9	50,000
Ginebra San Miguel Ins.	38	38	38	38	15,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	29.5	29	29.5	493,600
RFM Corp.	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.93	300,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	56.5	43,100
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79.5	79.5	62,900
Universal Robina Corp.	9.6	10	9.6	10	121,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	11	11	11	11	4,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.013	0.011	0.012	303,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	54,400,000
Ayala Corp.	8.1	8.1	8	8	8,294,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.6	1,040,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.5	4.55	4.5	4.55	95,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.046	0.055	0.046	0.055	100,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.02	2.02	1.98	1.98	942,000
APC Group Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.5	0.5	7,890,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	46,000,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	20.75	21.5	20.75	21.5	24,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.19	6,620,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.34	1.34	43,301,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.25	2,200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	6,500,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.61	0.64	0.6	0.61	9,820,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.3	4	4.1	4,764,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.065	0.0575	0.0625	16,100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	400,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	11	11	10.5	10.5	612,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	57	57.5	57	57.5	932,700
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.27	0.32	0.27	0.32	1,680,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.125	0.135	0.12	0.125	43,730,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.78	1.8	1,908,000
Ionics Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.76	78,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	332,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	220,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	6,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.7	3,594,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.37	0.41	0.37	0.38	1,750,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	52,700,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.39	0.39	1,500,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.37	450,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	50,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	30,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.22	0.165	0.21	52,780,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	2,320,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	1,560,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.68	1.76	1.68	1.76	31,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.155	0.17	0.155	0.155	17,650,000
Pryce Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	100,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	12,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.68	1.7	10,153,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.3	1.22	1.24	3,475,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.3	1.62	1.3	1.52	30,605,000
Manila Jockey Club	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	8,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.4	0.44	0.4	0.41	16,110,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	17.75	18	17.25	17.5	954,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	6,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.4	36,240,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	1,020,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	6,800,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.36	0.36	28,300,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	230,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.54	13,430,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.78	1.8	5,213,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.18	0.2	0.18	0.2	3,100,000
Gotesco Land Inc B	0.18	0.21	0.18	0.2	550,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,900,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	50,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.225	0.25	0.225	0.25	2,930,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	640,000
SM Development Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.9	1.9	196,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.7	8.9	8.6	8.6	2,072,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.1	1.14	1.08	1.14	288,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	218,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	79,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.8	514,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4	4	3.3	3.3	18,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.41	20,610,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.45	75,770,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	75,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	393,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	440,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	2,754,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.46	1.52	1.46	1.48	13,519,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	46	46.5	44	44	747,600
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.017	134,900,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.008	0.006	0.006	10,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	100,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	35,000,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.018	0.014	0.018	357,800,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3	3	3	3	82,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.24	79,770,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.44	0.44	0.4	0.4	700,000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Savings associations oppose withdrawal of perks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY's non-stock savings and loans associations, the expanded and formal versions of the "*paluwagan*" system, are stiffly opposing Congress' proposal to lift their tax exemptions.

The withdrawal of the fiscal incentives enjoyed by the savings and loans associations forms part of the tax measures pushed by the government raise additional revenues. Such a move, according to sources, is aimed at raising between P1.5 billion and P2 billion in additional revenue for the government.

In an interview yesterday, Confederation of Non-Stock Savings & Loan Associations Inc. (Consla) and Armed Forces & Police Savings & Loan Associations Inc. president Rufino Ibay Jr. said the lifting of the tax exemption would kill this alternative savings-generating sector.

"In the long run, the industry will start deteriorating because its resources will dwindle. Its earnings and depositors will decline as they will transfer to other [investment] areas," Ibay said at the sidelines of a Consla forum.

At present, the industry enjoys an average growth rate of 20 percent per year in terms of resources and business turnover.

The non-stock savings and loans associations operate on the principle of self-help wherein members pool their resources and borrow from it to finance their small-scale businesses and other emergency needs at very low interest rates.

House Bill No. 3295 which was passed by Congress last month, seeks to slap a 32-percent corporate income tax on the sector and another 10-percent tax on dividends declared.

Consla is asking lawmakers to reconsider the bill, as most of its members belong to the so-called "high-credit risk" sector who cannot obtain loans from banks for lack of collateral.

"HB 3295 elevates the NSSLAI to the status of a bank, a corporate financial institution subject to all taxes. But the bank is very different from NSSLAI, whether in terms of capital, size, stockholders, market and most especially motivation," the group said in a position paper.

"NSSLAI is a non-stock, non-profit organization. Service to the members is foremost. A bank is licensed to receive deposit from the public, NSSLAI is not and it serves only its members," it added.

Citing Consla's simulations, Ibay added the yearly yield enjoyed by its members would slide from about 18.5 percent per year to only 10 to 11 percent once the fiscal incentives were withdrawn.

"We have about 1.7 million members who will be affected, but the total impact will be on seven million people because these members have families," Ibay said.

He said the 1.7 million members of about 85 NSSLAs across the country—composed of vendors, teachers, soldiers, policemen, firefighters, employees and retirees—were worried as the passage of the bill would mean higher costs of borrowings and lower returns on their savings.

Ibay estimated that the sector currently had P53 billion worth of lending portfolio out of about P63 billion in total assets.

The NSSLAs believe there are other means for the government to generate revenues.

The savings and loan industry started in the 1940s. The first units were actually expanded versions of the paluwagan and mutual relief fund rolled into one, seeking to encourage thrift and frugality among its members who belonged to specific communities. Through this operation, profits earned are returned to the members in the form of dividends.

In the Senate, however, Consla found an ally in Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who sponsored a bill seeking the retention of the sector's tax exemption.

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Bangkok meet was all about issues, not policies, says official

TOKYO—A meeting of Asian policy makers and academics this week in Bangkok was not designed to discuss specific policy steps, a former Japanese financial diplomat who helped set up the group said on Friday.

The Korea Times reported on Thursday that the meeting of officials from South Korea, Japan, China and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, talked about how to cope with the weakness of the US dollar and a possible revaluation of the Chinese yuan.

But Takatoshi Ito, a former Japanese deputy vice finance minister for international affairs, said the gathering was a forum to discuss economic and financial issues, not set policy.

"It is aimed at promoting frank discussions among university professors and senior officials from the region's central banks and finance ministries on international monetary issues," Ito said.

"It is absolutely not for making policy decisions or taking actions on issues ... For instance, specific issues like steps to halt a decline in the dollar is not something we discuss at this meeting."

The Bangkok gathering prompted market speculation over the purpose of the meeting since Asian central banks have been funding a fat chunk of the US current account deficit with their reserves.

A South Korea report referring to reserves diversification prompted an across-the-board sell off in the dollar on Tuesday, highlighting market sensitivity over the fate of the currency.

Ito said the new group is an Asian version of the Bellagio Group, which was established by academics in the 1960s as a private forum to discuss international monetary affairs candidly with policy makers from G10 members such as the United States, Japan and Europe.

The new group in Asia is named the "Bangkok Expert Group," sources close to the forum said.

"In Washington or London, there are many places where academics and policymakers can meet frequently and exchange views," said Ito, currently a professor at the University of Tokyo.

"But there is not such a forum in Asia ... I hope this will offer new opportunities for academics and policymakers to build contacts," he said.

Ito said the Bangkok discussions were at an intellectual level.

The group would meet again, but he declined to say when and where.

He stressed it was important to keep the meeting closed so that participants could discuss issues freely.

The most recent meeting of the original Bellagio Group, named after a resort town in Italy where the inaugural session was held, took place in Amsterdam last month and was chaired by US professor Barry Eichengreen.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. *Reuters*

Southeast Asia stocks edge higher

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JAPANESE stock prices are shown with plus figures at a Tokyo brokerage as the market welcomed Japan's stronger-than-expected industrial output for January. The Nikkei Stock Average of 225 selected issues added 81.27 points, or 0.69 percent, to end morning trade at 11,739.52 points. AP

SINGAPORE—Most Southeast Asian stocks yesterday edged higher, cheered by gains on Wall Street, with top banks DBS Group Holdings Ltd. and Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd. among the top gainers.

By 0414 GMT Monday, Singapore's key index was up 0.03 percent, Malaysia's index was 0.27 percent higher, and Thai stocks were 0.16 percent up.

Japan's Nikkei stock average yesterday scaled eight-month highs while South Korean shares hit a five-year high as new indicators pointed to global economic strength.

Indonesian stocks bucked the trend, falling 0.81 percent.

Losses were led by top car distributor Astra International, which fell about 2 percent. Dealers said Astra shares had been under pressure since last Thursday when they hit a record high of 11,750 rupiah.

Buying of recently battered Singapore banking stocks, which analysts said had disappointed investors with small dividend payouts, tempered a 10-percent fall in People's Food Holdings Ltd. ahead of the food manufacturers' 2004 results scheduled to be released yesterday.

Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. (SingTel), the most active blue chip, was down by about 0.8 percent. SingTel hit a 4-year intraday high of S$2.73 on Friday.

Malaysian stocks were buoyed by gains of about a percent each in top phone operator Telekom Malaysia and conglomerate Genting Bhd.

Genting reported on Friday a 59-percent jump in fourth-quarter earnings, helped by higher profits in its energy, plantations and paper business.

Gains in Thai stocks were led by energy firm PTT PCL, which was up by about 4 percent.

PTT said on Friday it expected sales and earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) to rise 10 percent from last year due to higher petroleum demand.

Japan's industrial production rose 2.1 percent in January from a month earlier, above a median market forecast of 1.7 percent, while South Korean factory output rose 3.1 percent, its fastest since August 2003.

"The industrial output data is lifting optimism about the local economy," said Kim Hyun-tae, a fund manager at South Korea's Woori Investment Trust Management. "The US economy is also growing strongly," supporting optimism about Asia's biggest export market.

The Nikkei closed up 0.71 percent at 11,740.60, led by steel makers such as JFE Holdings.

Seoul shares gained 1.45 percent, led by blue chips such as Kookmin Bank.

The MSCI index of non-Japan Asian stock markets jumped 1.21 percent to its highest level in more than seven years, while MSCI's World Index rose 0.4 percent to a four-year peak.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 1.02 percent. Mining heavyweight BHP Billiton surged 2.9 percent to a record high despite going ex-dividend, on soaring iron ore prices.

Analysts said the market has already factored in a rate rise this week by the Reserve Bank of Australia, the first since December 2003.

New Zealand's benchmark index rose 1.5 percent to a record high.

The Japanese data and a warning from the Bank of Japan that markets should be careful about factoring in an extended period of monetary easing depressed the country's government bond prices.

Ten-year Japanese government bond (JGB) futures fell to 138.00 in late trading, a level not seen since early December.

Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd., the world's top maker of memory chips, rose 0.96 percent in Seoul, underperforming the market after its vice chair said the outlook for its key businesses was clouded by slower global economic growth and sluggish domestic consumption.

Wall Street rallied on data showing the US economy grew at a revised 3.8 percent annual rate in the fourth quarter, compared with a forecast by economists for a 3.7 percent rise.

Spot gold was trading around $436.80 an ounce from $434.55 late in New York, supported by weakness in the dollar. *Reuters*

Malaysia upholds claim on East Borneo oil

KUALA LUMPUR—Two deepwater oil blocks in the Sulawesi Sea east of Borneo island are within Malaysia's territory, contrary to Indonesia's claims, Malaysia's prime minister yesterday said.

"Actually, the people at Petronas know that the area is within our territory," Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told reporters.

"If the area is somebody else's, why should Petronas go in there," he was quoted by the official Bernama news agency as saying.

Earlier this month Petronas awarded two new blocks, ND6 and ND7 off Borneo island, to local unit Petronas Carigali and Shell Malaysia, part of Royal Dutch/Shell.

But Indonesia, Southeast Asia's top oil producer, on Sunday said it had lodged a protest against the oil production sharing contract in the area Jakarta claims as its territory.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Marty Natalegawa said Indonesia would do everything in its power to safeguard its rights to oil and gas blocks in the area.

Abdullah said Malaysia's foreign ministry would respond to the protest.

Malaysia, the number two regional producer behind Indonesia, is also locked in a dispute with Brunei on the ownership of two large deepwater blocks in the South China Sea. *Reuters*

China unveils new steps to resist yuan revaluation

BEIJING—China, keen to relieve pressure on its currency to rise amid talk of a possible revaluation, has pledged to cut its growing balance of payments surplus by letting more foreign currency leave the country.

Chinese leaders, while resisting foreign pressure to revalue the yuan, have pledged to make the yuan more flexible through reforms and have insisted the country should meet certain preconditions, such as a stable economy and heathy financial system, before any currency change.

"Our country's goal is to make the international balance of payments basically balanced, or to have a small surplus," the Financial News quoted Guo Shuqing, head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, as saying.

He did not specify a timeframe.

"Imbalanced external payments reflect internal economic imbalances, which in turn intensify economic imbalances."

China's capital account surplus more than doubled last year to about $112 billion, boosted by strong inflows fanned by speculation authorities would revalue the yuan, currently managed in a tight range of 8.276 to 8.28 per dollar.

Last week, state media quoted a foreign exchange official as saying that China had a current account surplus of about $70 billion last year, far higher than the $20 billion given by central bank chief Zhou Xiaochuan earlier this month.

The balance of payments comprise the capital and current account.

Analysts say capital inflows make it harder for the government to cool the economy because the central bank has to issue yuan to soak up the foreign money, fueling credit and inflation.

China would gradually liberalize the capital account to make the yuan fully convertible eventually, Guo said without giving a timetable. The yuan is convertible on the current account.

In addition to steps unveiled on Saturday that China would let insurers invest overseas, the newspaper quoted Guo as saying domestic firms would be allowed to keep the proceeds from their overseas stock listings. But China would take more steps to curb short-term capital inflows.

China would develop the foreign exchange market, including giving banks and firms wider access to foreign currency, to help "perfect the yuan exchange rate's formation mechanism," Guo said.

Analysts say the remarks show that Beijing is reluctant to revalue, or adjust the yuan's value, fearing that heated speculation may pose a greater danger if it rushes into change.

The top policy priority is to relieve pressure on the yuan while developing a market infrastructure to help create conditions to let the yuan eventually move more freely. *Reuters*

China IPOs will flow, but investors get picky

HONG KONG—Plenty of Chinese firms plan IPOs, but investor attention is elsewhere, and the daunting task of reforming China's troubled banks may cause this year's haul of new Hong Kong issues to undershoot last year's $12.5 billion.

So far this year through Feb. 11, roughly $6 billion in foreign funds poured into stocks in India, Taiwan and South Korea, while Hong Kong and China saw net outflows of nearly $400 million, UBS said.

"There's a huge amount of capital available—it just seems to be focused on things which are outside of China at the moment," said Matthew Koder, head of Asia equity capital markets at UBS. "We think money will continue to flow into China. It's just become more selective."

IPO hopefuls, driven by big mainland listing candidates, aim to raise as much as $29 billion in Hong Kong this year.

But fundraisings by China Construction Bank and Bank of China, two of the "big four" lenders, may be pushed into next year as they scramble to clean up bad debt and other legacies of decades of state-directed lending, market watchers say.

Still, overseas investors should get their first crack at a Chinese bank IPO when number-five lender Bank of Communications raises up to $2 billion, possibly in the second quarter.

Minsheng Banking Corp., China's lone private lender, also hopes to raise up to $1 billion in Hong Kong this year.

Outside banks, companies feeding China's hunger for energy and other natural resources intend to be heavy fundraisers. Top coal miner Shenhua Group could raise up to $3 billion in a dual Hong Kong and Shanghai IPO, while number-two China National Coal Group wants about $1 billion.

Small consumer IPOs have been recent hot sellers, and are expected to remain popular.

"I like consumer-related stocks, especially those with brands and distribution networks like Dynasty and Fu Ji Food," said Yang Liu, China-focused fund manager at Atlantis Investment.

But some of the biggest China IPO candidates may have to hang fire through 2005.

Beijing's efforts to prevent overheating in several industries, including cars and steel, has also crimped interest in the $200 million IPO by Kunming Iron and Steel. Last week it postponed IPO marketing indefinitely. A rival, China Guofeng Group, delayed its $200 million IPO late last year.

High raw materials prices are also making investors wary of resource-hungry firms. "I like commodities but I don't like processors because they face a margin squeeze," said an investment officer at fund managers Invesco. Reuters

Japan official sees low risk of trade slump

TOKYO—Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui yesterday said that he would not expect the Japanese economy to fall into a serious downturn after contracting for most of 2004.

"In light of recent softer economic indicators, such as [gross domestic product] data and the coincident index, we cannot rule out the possibility of the economy falling into recession," the central bank chief said in a speech.

"However, overall, I see a low risk of the economy falling into a serious recession," Fukui said.

Although the government does not officially call 2004's economic performance a "recession," Fukui said he could not deny that the economy was in a technical recession.

His comments followed early yesterday's news that January industrial output rose 2.1 percent, well above economist forecasts for a gain of 0.8 percent after a fall of 0.8 percent in December.

The trade ministry also said commercial sales in Japan, or total sales at the wholesale and retail levels, rose 3.1 percent year-on-year in January, the eighth consecutive monthly increase.

Last week, Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki said the economy should pick up later this year on firmer exports and recovering consumption.

Official data showed that Japan's GDP has contracted mildly since April, slipping into a technical recession as slower exports and consumption hit total output.

BANK of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui delivers a speech during a seminar at a Tokyo hotel. AFP

The three quarters' downturn is the worst since the economy contracted for four consecutive quarters from April-June 2001 to January-March 2002, when it was hit by the bursting of the information technology bubble.

Economists have said the world's second-largest economy should be back on track later this year in line with an expected global economic recovery.

They also said consumption should rebound after a slump in the October-December quarter, when temporary factors such as natural disasters and a warm winter depressed spending.

Japanese industrial production rose more strongly than expected in January from a month earlier, helped by firm exports, reinforcing the view that the economy is on its way out of a shallow recession.

Separate data showing that retail sales in January gained at the fastest year-on-year pace since 1997 also encouraged views of a broad recovery. Housing starts also rose more than expected.

According to data from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japanese industrial output increased 2.1 percent, above a median market forecast of 1.7 percent.

Chemicals, cars and electronic goods such as video cameras led the rise in output, suggesting to economists that a recent slowdown in exports—the main force behind Japan's recovery—may be abating.

"Production of high-tech goods has stopped declining, and this reflects better external demand, as evidenced in recent figures for a stronger global economic outlook," said Kiichi Murashima, director of economic and market analysis at Nikko Citigroup.

The US economy, the biggest market for most Asian exporters, grew at a 3.8 percent annual rate in the last three months of 2004, setting the stage for a healthy start to 2005.

However the government forecast that Japanese manufacturers' output—the core component of production—would fall 0.5 percent in February and another 1.0 percent in March.

"Ideally, you would've wanted to see a forecast for a rise in March, but the forecast declines for February and March are relatively small," said Seiji Adachi, senior economist at Deutsche Securities. "You can say it's plateauing—the index level itself is at a fairly high level."

The ministry maintained its assessment that industrial production was in a flat trend, but an official said inventory adjustments in the IT sector, which have weighed on production and the economy over the past several months, may end soon.

"Many in the industry say adjustments could bottom out in January-March and that the tide could turn from April-June," an official said.

Overall inventories rose 2.0 percent month-on-month, but inventories at electronic parts makers fell 1.2 percent.

The yen strengthened to around 104.53 to the dollar from 105.20 before the data. The March 10-year Japanese government bond futures contract was down 0.45 point at 138.19, while the Nikkei share average ended up 0.71 percent at 11,740.60, its highest close since July 1.

Domestic retail sales rose 2.2 percent in January from a year earlier, the biggest rise since a 12.4 percent jump in March 1997 when shoppers rushed to buy goods ahead of a rise in the sales tax. Economists had expected a rise of 0.3 percent in January.

From December, retail sales rose 5.7 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis, helped by sales of food and drinks, flat screen TVs and DVD players. *AFP, Reuters*

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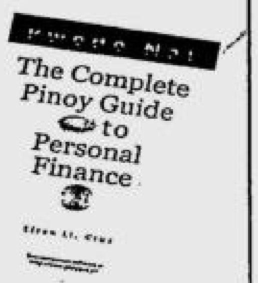

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- On Insurance
- On Credit Card

About the Author and Resource:

For the past twenty years, Efren Ll. Cruz has been involved in various aspects of fund management, the last nine years of which have been in the mutual fund industry. He was, at one time, appointed Vice President of the First Philippine Fund, a closed-end country fund listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He regularly conducts personal financial planning seminars for his mutual fund clients.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that the 62 Card with License No. 16667N95 under name of Dr. Janeth Samson was lost. (PDI-Mar. 1, 2005)

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my idea. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen J.B.DeJesus

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ALBERTO JUAT MANALAYSAY

of Obando Bulacan and Quezon City
February 11, 1918 – February 28, 2005

He is survived by his loving wife **Gloria Legaspi Penson**, Children **Citos**, **Min** and **Cris**, Son-in-Law **Carlito**, Daughter-in-Law **Karin** and **Marissa**. Grandchildren **Jay & Rose**, **Michelle**, **Jon**, **Anna**, **Kathy**, **Geline**, **Carmina** and **Krizia** and Great Grandson **CJ**.

His remains lie in state at Chapel B-5, Funeraria Paz, Quezon City.

Cremation is scheduled at 9:00 AM Wednesday, March 02, 2005.

"The Lord is My Shepherd,
There is nothing I shall want." — Ps 23

Our Beloved Father

FELICIANO D. HERNANDEZ

Peacefully joined our Creator on February 26, 2005.

His loving children, **Maridel** and **Djoma**, **Jimi** and **Beth**, **Joy**, **Mike** and **Ej**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request you to join us in praying for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

A requiem Mass will be celebrated on March 5, 2005 at 8:00 AM at Sacred Heart Parish, Kamuning, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

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NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF RIZAL (Occidental Mindoro), INC.

1. The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation(PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Rizal (Occidental Mindoro) Inc. (RBRI) on Wednesday, **March 2, 2005.**
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of RBRI where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives from **March 2** to **March 10, 2005**, during office hours, Monday to Friday.

   After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS Bldg., Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or by mail to:

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue
   1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
   b. Two (2) latest identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

   Other documents maybe required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Rizal (Occidental Mindoro), Inc. is on **February 25, 2007**. After **February 25, 2007**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - Mar. 1 & 2, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Department of Transportation and Communications
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Quezon City

BMC CASE NO. 2005-001

SULU TAWI-TAWI BROADCASTING
FOUNDATION, INC., (VICARIATE OF JOLO),
Applicant
x---x

NOTICE OF HEARING

Applicant, SULU TAWI-TAWI BROADCASTING FOUNDATION, INC., (VICARIATE OF JOLO), a Filipino corporation duly organized and existing under Philippine laws and a grantee of a Congressional Franchise by virtue of R.A. No. 8082, requests in the above-entitled case for the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience to construct, install, operate and maintain TVRO and DXMM-AM in JOLO, SULU.

Applicant further requests for a Provisional Authority pending final determination of the application.

This application will be heard by this Commission on MARCH 16, 2005 at 9:30 a.m. at its Office, National Telecommunications Commission, BIR Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City at which hearing applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of hearing, applicant shall publish this Notice of Hearing once in one (1) Metro Manila edited daily newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines and serve by registered mail or personal delivery copies of the application and the Notice of Hearing to all affected parties as appearing in the attached list.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition on or before the date of hearing furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant and appear at the hearing with such evidence as may be proper in the premises. Failure on the part of any affected party to file his opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of his right to be heard, the Commission will then proceed to hear and decide the application on its merits.

WITNESS, the HON. RONALD OLIVAR SOLIS, Commissioner, National Telecommunications Commission this 4th day of February 2005.

(Sgd.) MA. VICTORIA DORONILA-DEYPALUBOS
Acting Board Secretary

(PDI—March 1, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
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2)	Vilma De Guzman Aquino	Unknown	Eduardo E. Aquino SS#03-1557453-5	January 16, 2005
3)	Rosiemarie Azote	Unknown	Edgardo C. Azote SS#03-6857882-1	January 13, 2005
4)	Alfredo Barrientos	Unknown	Manuel Barrientos SS#03-1056745-3	May 19, 2004
5)	Remedios & Noel Buguna	1609 Milagros St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Claro Buguna SS#03-2090643-1	September 29, 2004
6)	Rowena Bustamante	Unknown	Nestor Bustamante SS#03-4822314-1	January 1, 2005
7)	Alberta Callo	Unknown	Simplicio Callo SS#03-1893469-3	November 26, 2004
8)	Ma. Teresa Escalante	Unknown	Rodolfo Companero SS#06-0523793-5	November 27, 2004
9)	Lucas Dizon	Unknown	Levy P. Dizon SS#01-0882323-1	December 30, 2004
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11)	Melicia R. Bayno	Unknown	Daniel S. Flores SS#07-1195837-3	August 23, 2003
12)	Teresita Delin	Unknown	Eremo Galindo SS#07-0618003-3	July 18, 2001
13)	Susan Guillermo	Unknown	Eddie V. Guillermo SS#07-0945911-4	July 16, 2004
14)	Felix Hore	656 P. Paterno, Quiapo, MM	Cayetano Hore SS#03-4771541-4	September 26, 2004
15)	Yolanda P. Jabon	Unknown	Fidel O. Jabon, Jr. SS#03-4167707-0	April 15, 2003
16)	Angel Joaquin	2647 R. Fernandez St., Gagalangin, Tondo, Manila	Lourdes M. Joaquin SS#03-5992498-9	August 6, 2004
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20)	Rosario Bansobre	Bulacan	Marlex Meja SS#07-1430814-0	December 31, 1999
21)	Flora A. Ranile	2105 San Andres Ext., Sta. Ana, Manila	Bonifacio Ranile SS#03-2843126-7	November 20, 2004
22)	Danilo Ranoco, Sr.	Manila	Manuel Ranoco SS#08-0324030-6	December 3, 2004
23)	Celita N. Lemos	Orani, Bataan, Bataan	Arturo Reyes SS#03-3644624-4	December 19, 2004
24)	Purisima Diossia	Unknown	Carlito Samson SS#03-1656419-1	July 1, 2004
25)	Elisa Tolentino	1460 Prudencio St., Sampaloc, Manila	Benjamin P. Tolentino SS#03-0761729-3	January 18, 2005
26)	Annaliza / Arneza G. Torallo	Japan	Renato R. Torallo SS#05-0438091-3	September 4, 2004
27)	Alicia & Rozyl N. Torres	Quezon City	Restituto T. Torres, Jr. SS#03-8404156-3	April 25, 2004
28)	Mely Ruta	Libmanan, Camarines Sur	Artemio Valencia SS#03-1682860-2	January 20, 2005
29)	Porcibal Rivera Aida Noynay	Unknown	Danilo Villaester SS#33-0722044-1	January 23, 2004
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Basic lower back pain prevention tips

Part One

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IF you've ever experienced pain in your lower back, you know it is not pleasant.

It can make you totally miserable because it limits what you can do. Lower back pain is even more of a problem if it becomes chronic.

Preventing the problem is more effective and productive than curing it. Here are some basic prevention tips:

Don't smoke.

Smoking not only causes lung cancer and heart disease but it can also contribute to back pain. Scientists believe smoking decreases the flow of blood and nutrients to the spinal discs (round elastic structures between your vertebrae that act like shock absorbers). This can lead to premature aging and degeneration of the discs.

Lose weight.

Carrying excess weight, especially in the abdominal area, puts unnecessary stress on the spine and muscles and ligaments of your back. Losing weight will take the pressure off your other joints as well.

Don't sit for prolonged periods.

Sitting for prolonged periods compresses the spinal discs and hampers proper circulation. Get up from time to time to get your blood flowing and relieve stress on your back.

Stand tall.

Poor posture is a common cause of back pain. Whether you slouch forward or have an exaggerated arch in your lower back, you put stress on your discs. What is proper posture? Your ear, shoulder and hip must be in a straight line.

Exercise.

Many cases of back pain result from weak and tight trunk muscles. Most often, abdominal muscles are weak and back muscles are both weak and tight. Keeping the trunk muscles strong and flexible is probably one of the best ways to prevent back pain.

Tight, inflexible leg muscles contribute to back pain because they pull the pelvis out of alignment. Do stretching exercises for these muscles, too.

It's a good idea to be strong and flexible everywhere because strong arms and legs will take the load off the spine. Aerobic exercise helps indirectly because it increases circulation that helps keep the spinal discs healthy. Being a couch potato can lead to a painful back.

Relax.

Stress can cause back muscles to become taut and tense. This in turn can cause muscle spasms and pain. Unresolved emotional stress causes more back problems than most people realize.

Lighten your bag.

Heavy shoulder bags, briefcases and laptop computer bags can throw your spine out of whack. Bring only what is necessary or carry your bags backpack-style to balance the stress on your spine.

Throw away your high heels.

High heels may look sexy but they are back-breakers in disguise. Heels higher than 2 inches throw your body forward. To compensate you lean backward and arch your spine more than you should. To avoid back and knee pain, wear sturdy heels no more than 2 inches high. The worst offenders are stiletto heels.

Watch your back during pregnancy.

Your growing tummy stretches the muscles of your abdomen, shortens and tightens the muscles of your lower back and causes you to arch back (just like a man with a beer belly) so you won't fall flat on your face.

Strengthen and stretch your lower back. Don't gain more weight than you should. Keep aerobically fit by walking, swimming, or other low-impact exercise and pay attention to your posture.

Lift objects properly.

Whether you lift an object as heavy as a potted palm or pick up something as light as a pencil, proper techniques will go a long way in preventing lower back pain. Here are tips from Dr. James Peterson ("Back Pain in Corporate America," Fitness Management Magazine):

- Stand close to the object you're lifting, with your feet apart to ensure you have firm footing.
- Bend your knees, keeping your back as straight as possible by minimizing any bending at your waist. Bending at the waist increases the stress on your back.
- Tighten your stomach muscles before you lift. Think of your abdominal muscles as your anterior back muscles.
- Lift with your legs by slowly straightening them. Make your legs (not your back muscles) do the work.
- Hold the lifted load close to your body. The farther away an object is held from your body, the greater the stress it will place on your back.
- Keep your back in an upright position during the lift and while holding the object.
- Avoid twisting your body while lifting. Move your feet if it's necessary to change directions or to see something not otherwise in view.

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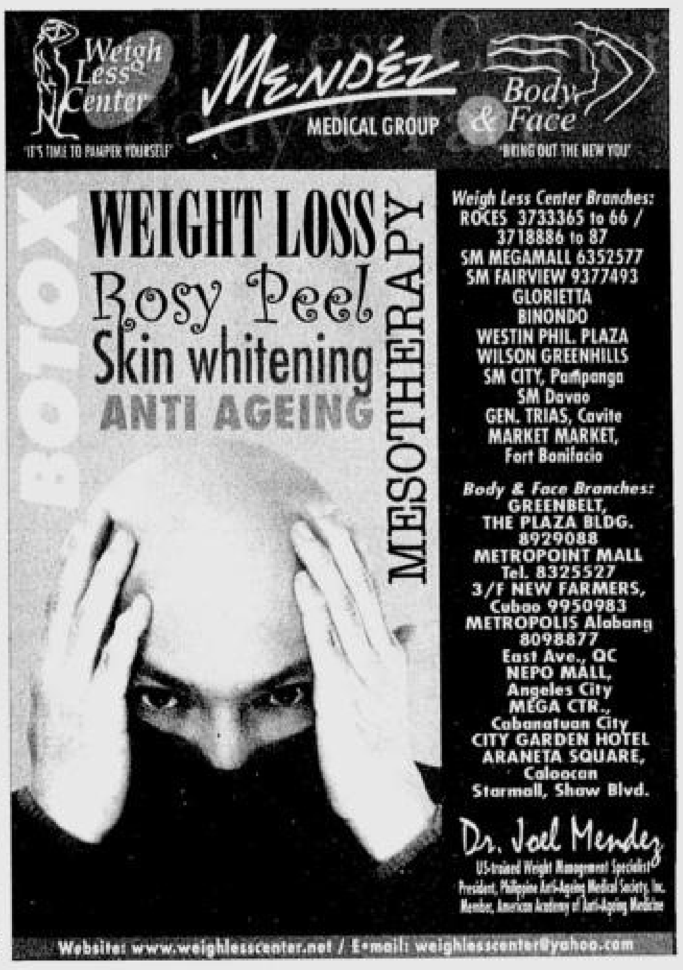

Weigh Less Center Branches:
ROCES 3733365 to 66 / 3718886 to 87
SM MEGAMALL 6352577
SM FAIRVIEW 9377493
GLORIETTA
BINONDO
WESTIN PHIL. PLAZA
WILSON GREENHILLS
SM CITY, Pampanga
SM Davao
GEN. TRIAS, Cavite
MARKET MARKET, Fort Bonifacio
Body & Face Branches:
GREENBELT, THE PLAZA BLDG. 8929088
METROPOINT MALL Tel. 8325527
3/F NEW FARMERS, Cubao 9950983
METROPOLIS Alabang 8098877
East Ave., QC
NEPO MALL, Angeles City
MEGA CTR., Cabanatuan City
CITY GARDEN HOTEL
ARANETA SQUARE, Caloocan
Starmall, Shaw Blvd.
Dr. Joel Mendez
US-trained Weight Management Specialist
President, Philippine Anti-Ageing Medical Society, Inc.
Member, American Academy of Anti-Ageing Medicine
Website: www.weighlesscenter.net / E-mail: weighlesscenter@yahoo.com

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

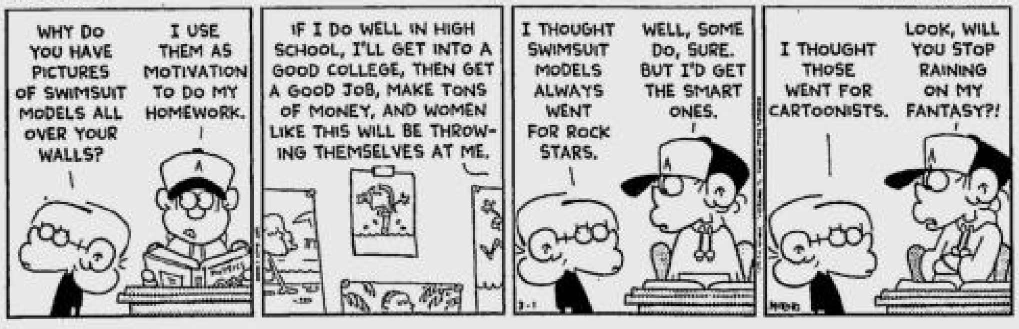
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2005

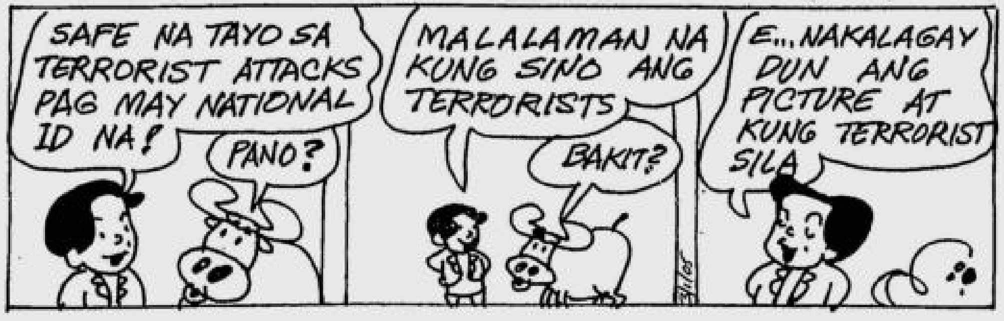
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHY DO YOU HAVE PICTURES OF SWIMSUIT MODELS ALL OVER YOUR WALLS?
I USE THEM AS MOTIVATION TO DO MY HOMEWORK.
IF I DO WELL IN HIGH SCHOOL, I'LL GET INTO A GOOD COLLEGE, THEN GET A GOOD JOB, MAKE TONS OF MONEY, AND WOMEN LIKE THIS WILL BE THROWING THEMSELVES AT ME.
I THOUGHT SWIMSUIT MODELS ALWAYS WENT FOR ROCK STARS.
WELL, SOME DO, SURE. BUT I'D GET THE SMART ONES.
I THOUGHT THOSE WENT FOR CARTOONISTS.
LOOK, WILL YOU STOP RAINING ON MY FANTASY?!

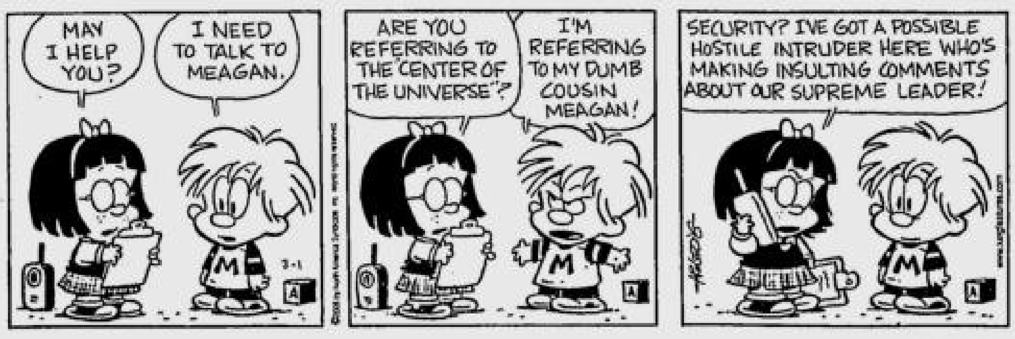
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SAFE NA TAYO SA TERRORIST ATTACKS PAG MAY NATIONAL ID NA!
PANO?
MALALAMAN NA KUNG SINO ANG TERRORISTS
BAKIT?
E... NAKALAGAY DUN ANG PICTURE AT KUNG TERRORIST SILA

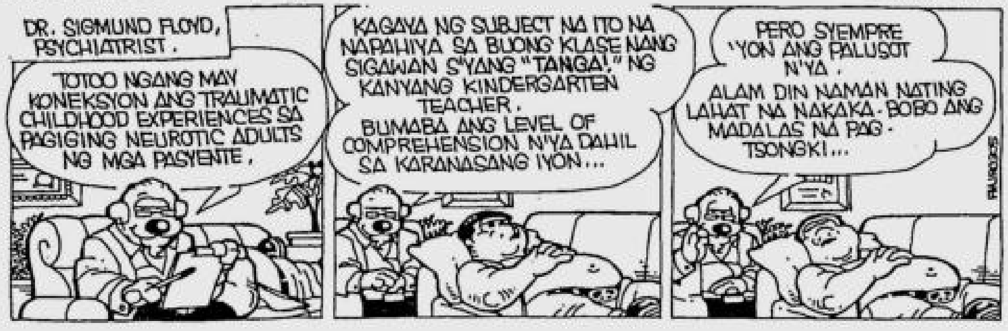
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MAY I HELP YOU?
I NEED TO TALK TO MEAGAN.
ARE YOU REFERRING TO THE "CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE"?
I'M REFERRING TO MY DUMB COUSIN MEAGAN!
SECURITY? I'VE GOT A POSSIBLE HOSTILE INTRUDER HERE WHO'S MAKING INSULTING COMMENTS ABOUT OUR SUPREME LEADER!

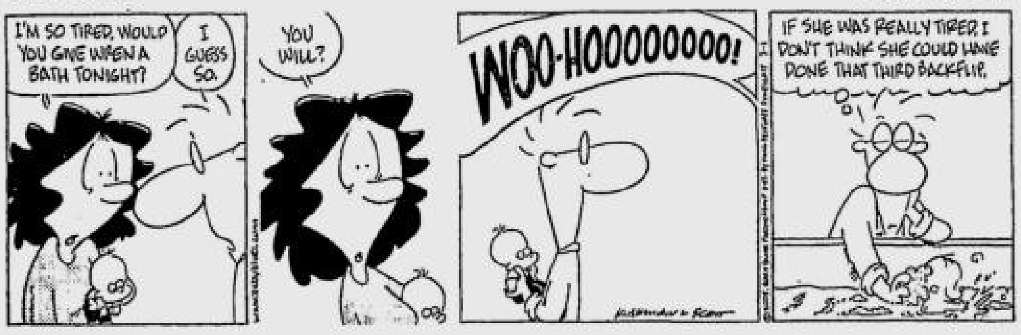
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DR. SIGMUND FLOYD, PSYCHIATRIST.
TOTOO NGANG MAY KONEKSYON ANG TRAUMATIC CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES SA PAGIGING NEUROTIC ADULTS NG MGA PASYENTE.
KAGAYA NG SUBJECT NA ITO NA NAPAHIYA SA BUONG KLASE NANG SIGAWAN S'YANG "TANGA!" NG KANYANG KINDERGARTEN TEACHER.
BUMABA ANG LEVEL OF COMPREHENSION N'YA DAHIL SA KARANASANG IYON...
PERO SYEMPRE 'YON ANG PALUSOT N'YA.
ALAM DIN NAMAN NATING LAHAT NA NAKAKA-BOBO ANG MADALAS NA PAG-TSONGKI...

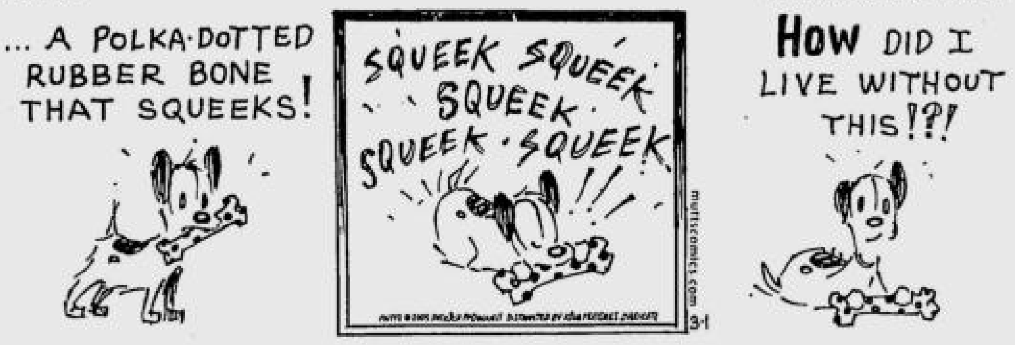
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M SO TIRED. WOULD YOU GIVE WREN A BATH TONIGHT?
I GUESS SO.
YOU WILL?
WOO-HOOOOOOOO!
IF SHE WAS REALLY TIRED I DON'T THINK SHE COULD HAVE DONE THAT THIRD BACKFLIP.

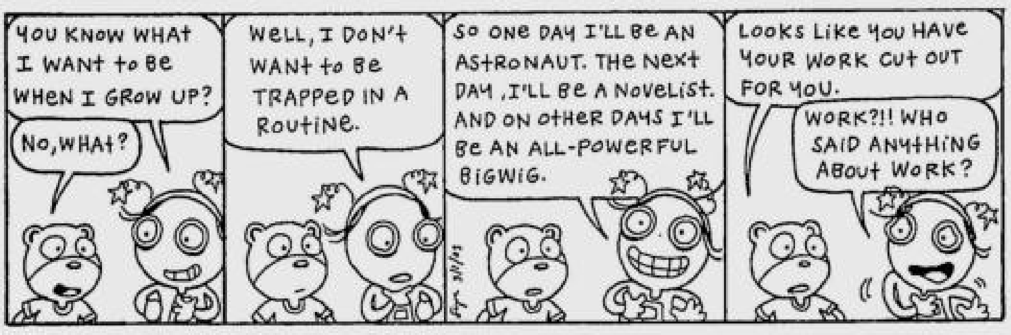
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


... A POLKA-DOTTED RUBBER BONE THAT SQUEEKS!
SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK · SQUEEK
HOW DID I LIVE WITHOUT THIS!?!
muttscomics.com
3-1

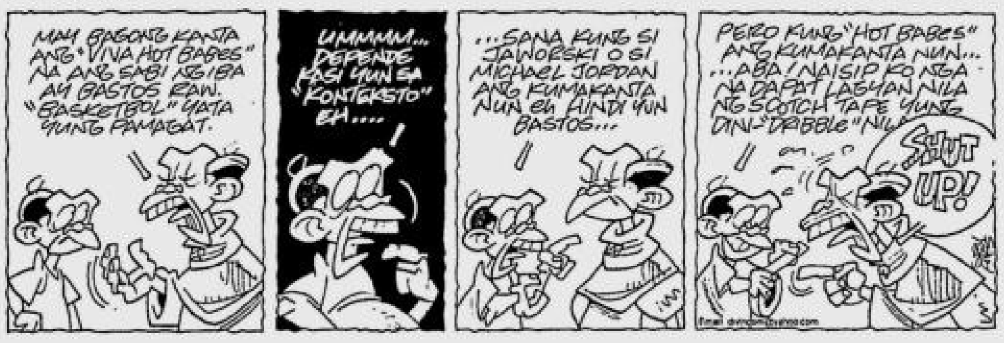
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP?
NO, WHAT?
WELL, I DON'T WANT TO BE TRAPPED IN A ROUTINE.
SO ONE DAY I'LL BE AN ASTRONAUT. THE NEXT DAY, I'LL BE A NOVELIST. AND ON OTHER DAYS I'LL BE AN ALL-POWERFUL BIGWIG.
LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE YOUR WORK CUT OUT FOR YOU.
WORK?!! WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT WORK?

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MAY BAGONG KANTA ANG "VIVA HOT BABES" NA ANG SABI NG IBA AY BASTOS RAW. "BASKETBOL" YATA YUNG PAMAGAT.
UMMMM... DEPENDE KASI YUN SA "KONTEKSTO" EH....
...SANA KUNG SI JAWORSKI O SI MICHAEL JORDAN ANG KUMAKANTA NUN EH HINDI YUN BASTOS...
PERO KUNG "HOT BABES" ANG KUMAKANTA NUN... ...ABA! NAISIP KO NGA NA DAPAT LAGYAN NILA NG SCOTCH TAPE YUNG DINI-"DRIBBLE" NIL...
SHUT UP!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have artistic sensibilities and technical know-how—an excellent combination for success. You're also aware of your personal appearance: You always look well pulled together. You have a natural elegance that is attractive. Your closest relationships and partnerships are your primary focus this year. Some will begin; some will end.

Birthdate of: Ron Howard, director; Glenn Miller, musician; Donovan Patton, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid arguments with others today. You can't resist jumping in with political or religious opinions about something. (You will only cause more friction. Don't do it.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're best off working alone today. Work by yourself and do some research. You could discover new solutions to old problems!

(May 21 to June 20): Power struggles with authority figures (parents, teachers, VIPs and the police) are likely today. Why even go there? Keep your opinions to yourself.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're extremely determined when you want to be. Today you can't shake a particular idea out of your head. Quit trying to persuade others to agree with you. Relax.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel strongly about shared property or how to share something with someone else. You want your views to be known. They could involve responsibilities for children.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): People should tread carefully when talking to you today. You mean what you say and you say what you mean. You feel strongly about something right now—don't we know it!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're like a stuck record about something at work today. You insist on getting your way. Fortunately, by nature you are diplomatic.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't be overbearing with children today. You're a very strong-willed sign, and often underestimate how powerful you are. Sometimes, you blow others away!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is an excellent day to make repairs at home or to fix anything that is broken. Avoid family arguments. People's minds are not flexible today. (Quite the opposite.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can't seem to get a particular idea out of your mind today. This could be something serious and important to you; or it might just be a song, like "I Shot the Sheriff."

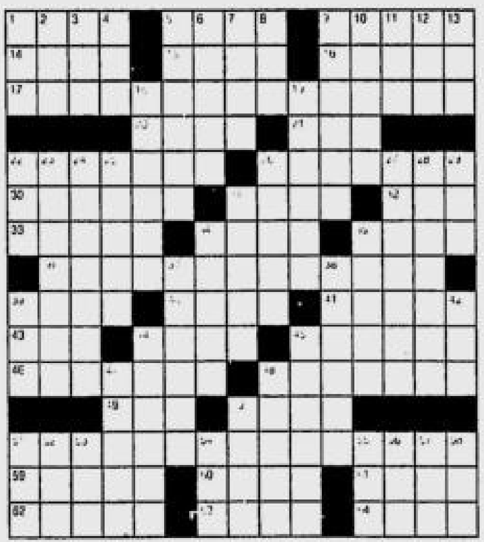
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Avoid financial arguments with others today. It's very easy to get into a disagreement about money or possessions. Or perhaps you're trying to return something to a store? Stay mellow.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Ego conflicts with parents and bosses are extremely likely today. That's because both parties (this includes you) are stuck in their point of view. Postpone this discussion if you can.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Whitecap weather
5 Ditto
9 Secret agents
14 On the Caspian
15 Marina structure
16 Merciless
17 Lighthouse feature
20 Where Moses floated
21 Slangy contradiction
22 Sea otter's snack
26 Blistering
30 Beat a retreat
31 Cheese ingredient
32 Genetic letters
33 Old photo hue
34 NASCAR word
35 Propel into space
36 Swiss army knife feature
39 The one here
40 Feline rumble
41 Double Dutch equipment
43 Post-dusk in poetry
44 Incorporated municipality
45 Cut in half
46 With a leg on each side of
48 Shore leave
49 Diamonds, slangily
50 Throw caution to the wind
51 Quadraphonic feature
59 Lubricated
60 Desert gully
61 Gobi's location
62 Met production
63 Ultimatum word
64 Count (on)

DOWN
1 Heating fuel
2 Poisonous snake
3 Waikiki garland
4 Sympathetic attention
5 Broken limb support
6 Church passage
7 Deal (out)
8 Period of note
9 __ of Turin
10 Peace accords
11 Pension $
12 Double bend
13 That girl
18 Arctic jacket
19 Lined up
22 Commercial blurbs
23 Gray-trunked trees
24 Deputize
25 Hideaways
26 More adorable
27 State police officer
28 Vary one's pitch
29 Garfield, e.g.
31 Spicy sauce
34 Shrewd
35 Unattached
37 Miss Muffet's surprise
38 Kinship groups
39 Sri Lankan export
42 Filthy place
44 Noisy insect
45 Shuttlecock
47 More mature
48 Touches down
50 Twofold
51 Court
52 Irving's Van Winkle
53 Pub purchase
54 Be beholding to
55 Crew member
56 Wear and tear
57 Zero
58 Singer Doris



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

3/1/05

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	L	I	M	B	■	E	L	E	C	T	■	B	B	C
R	E	N	E	E	■	N	O	R	A	H	■	O	E	R
E	M	E	R	A	L	D	I	S	L	E	■	L	A	O
T	O	R	E	R	O	■	S	T	O	R	E	S	U	P
E	N	T	■	H	E	M	■	■	R	A	S	H	■	■
■	■	■	R	U	B	Y	S	L	I	P	P	E	R	S
R	E	P	E	G	■	W	I	L	E	Y	■	V	I	A
A	S	A	P	■	S	O	D	A	S	■	H	I	C	K
N	A	P	■	H	A	R	E	M	■	S	I	K	H	S
D	I	A	M	O	N	D	B	A	C	K	S	■	■	■
■	■	R	E	T	D	■	■	S	R	I	■	P	A	H
G	L	A	S	S	I	N	E	■	I	M	P	A	L	A
R	O	Z	■	P	E	A	R	L	B	A	I	L	E	Y
A	D	Z	■	O	G	L	E	S	■	S	P	I	R	E
D	E	I	■	T	O	A	S	T	■	K	E	N	T	S

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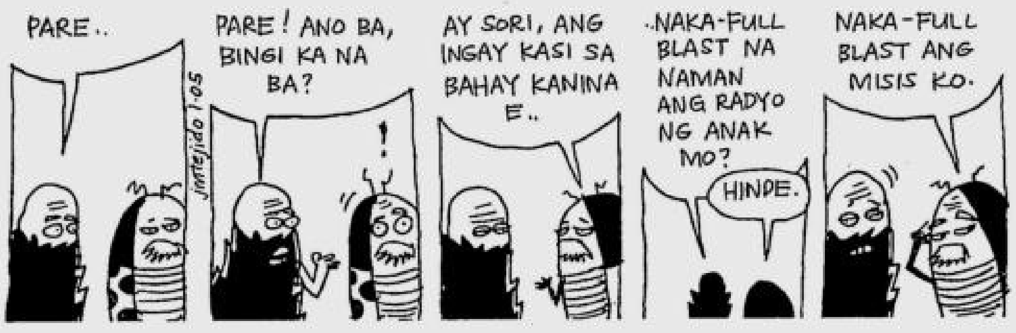
3/1/05

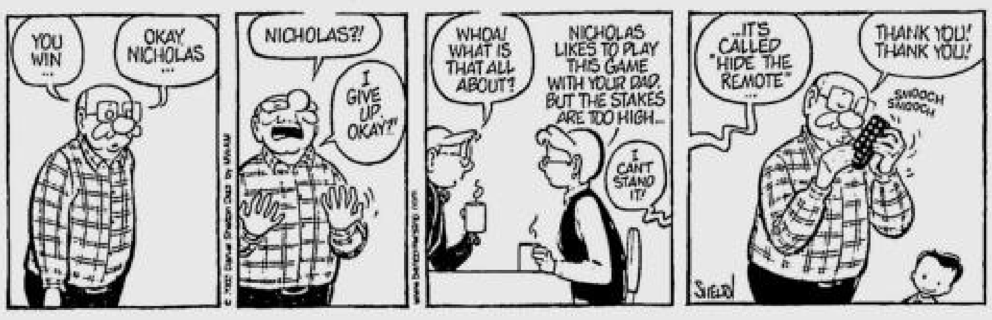
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARE..
PARE! ANO BA, BINGI KA NA BA?
jmtejido 1-05
AY SORI, ANG INGAY KASI SA BAHAY KANINA E..
..NAKA-FULL BLAST NA NAMAN ANG RADYO NG ANAK MO?
HINDE.
NAKA-FULL BLAST ANG MISIS KO.

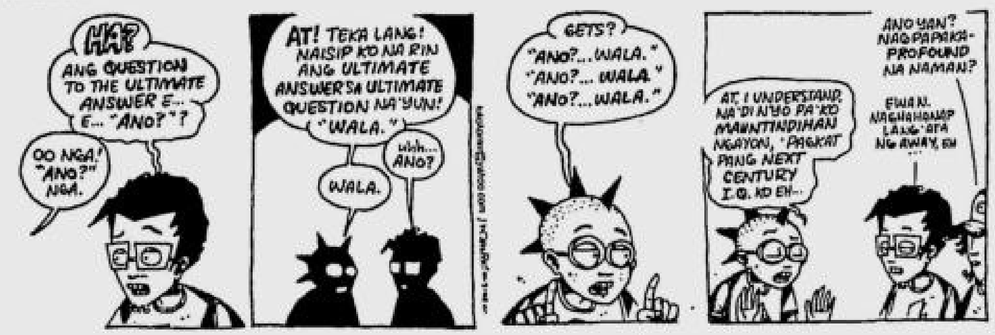
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU WIN ...
OKAY NICHOLAS ...
NICHOLAS?!
I GIVE UP. OKAY?!
WHOA! WHAT IS THAT ALL ABOUT?
NICHOLAS LIKES TO PLAY THIS GAME WITH YOUR DAD, BUT THE STAKES ARE TOO HIGH...
I CAN'T STAND IT!
...IT'S CALLED "HIDE THE REMOTE" ...
THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
SMOOCH SMOOCH

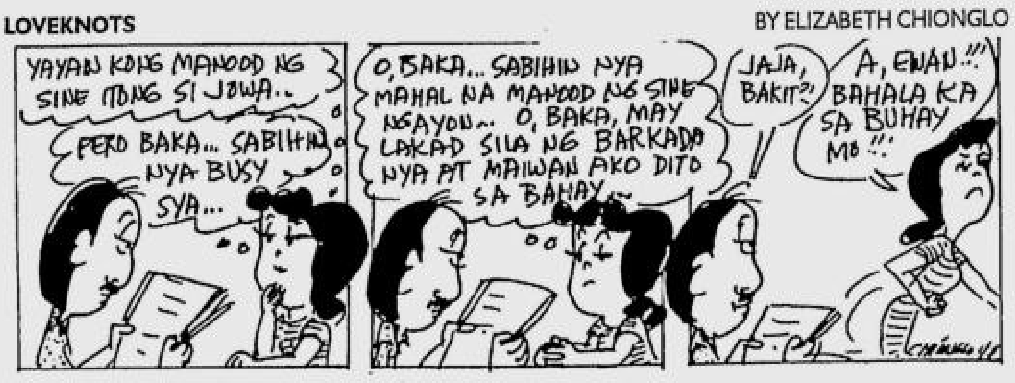
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HA?
ANG QUESTION TO THE ULTIMATE ANSWER E... E... "ANO?"?
OO NGA! "ANO?" NGA.
AT! TEKA LANG! NAISIP KO NA RIN ANG ULTIMATE ANSWER SA ULTIMATE QUESTION NA'YUN! "WALA."
WALA.
UHH... ANO?
GETS? "ANO?"... WALA." "ANO?"... WALA." "ANO?"... WALA."
AT, I UNDERSTAND NA 'DI N'YO PA 'KO MAINTINDIHAN NGAYON, 'PAGKAT PANG NEXT CENTURY I.Q. KO EH...
ANO YAN? NAGPAPAKA-PROFOUND NA NAMAN?
EWAN. NAGHAHANAP LANG 'ATA NG AWAY, EH ...

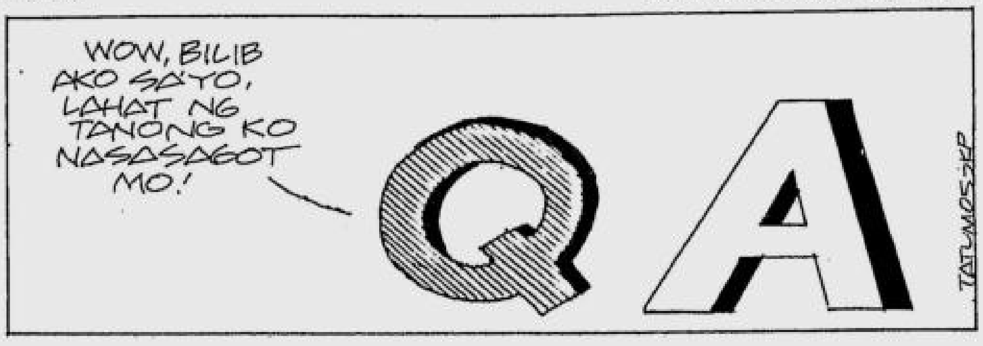
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


YAYAIN KONG MANOOD NG SINE ITONG SI JOWA..
PERO BAKA... SABIHIN NYA BUSY SYA...
O, BAKA... SABIHIN NYA MAHAL NA MANOOD NG SINE NGAYON... O, BAKA, MAY LAKAD SILA NG BARKADA NYA AT MAIWAN AKO DITO SA BAHAY...
JAJA, BAKIT?!
A, EWAN!!! BAHALA KA SA BUHAY MO!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WOW, BILIB AKO SA'YO, LAHAT NG TANONG KO NASASAGOT MO!
Q
A
TATUMOSZKP

The wonders of antioxidants

Part Two

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

IF you are health conscious, then you will be interested in how antioxidants can prolong and improve the quality of your life.

Antioxidants can help combat disease and delay the aging process.

Lester Packer, Ph.D., considered the world's leading antioxidant research scientist, shares his wisdom in his book, "The Antioxidant Miracle," co-authored by Carol Colman, a best-selling writer.

Here is the Packer Plan to start making miracles in your life.

Network antioxidants

These are the stars in the antioxidant horizon that work together.

Lipoic Acid—100 mg daily (50 mg in the morning, 50 mg in the afternoon). Though produced by the body, its production declines in midlife. It takes 7 lbs of spinach to make 1 mg of this antioxidant, hence the need to take supplements.

Benefits:

- Helps prevent cataracts, strokes, heart disease; an antidote to mushroom poisoning
- Prevents the activation of bad genes that can result in diseases like diabetes
- Boosts the immune system in the fight against acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)
- Brain booster, enhances memory
- Reduces the risk of disease in smokers.

Vitamin E—The anti-aging antioxidant. Take 500 mg daily (with tocopherols and tocotrienols).

Benefits:

- Cancer-fighter; eliminates free radicals before they can cause damage to the body
- Boosts longevity, eyesight, immune system
- Strengthens the heart against disease (heart attack victims registered a 77 percent improvement compared to those who didn't take Vitamin E)
- Prevents Alzheimer's disease by preventing damage to brain cells
- Helps control oxidative stress in the body (exercise causes oxidation due to the increased amount of oxygen needed by the body)
- Helps heal arthritis and reduces inflammation.

Vitamin C—Dosage: 500 mg daily of ester C (250 mg in the morning, 250 mg in the afternoon). Called the hub of antioxidants, the vitamin is central to linking fat-soluble antioxidants to water-soluble ones.

Benefits:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease and cancer
- Protects sperm from free radical damage
- Maintains a well-functioning immune system; may reduce the severity and length of colds and minimize presence of viruses in the body
- Protects against cataract and cancer (there is no risk of a toxic buildup of Vitamin C as any excess is flushed out of the body)
- Helps in collagen production thus, essential to great skin/complexion

Diabetics are advised to take more Vitamin C.

Co-enzyme Q10—Fat-soluble antioxidant that regenerates Vitamin E; a co-enzyme that works with an enzyme to produce a chemical change in the body

Dosage: 30 mg daily (additional 50 mg for those at risk of heart disease)

Benefits:

- May be a cancer fighter (cancer patients have been found to have low levels of Q10)
- Rejuvenates the brain by protecting brain cells; may also protect the brain against diseases associated with aging
- Prevents gum disease

Glutathione—Called the master antioxidant, it is important in detoxification.

Dosage: 100 mg daily of lipoic acid (glutathione is produced by the body and lipoic acid boosts its production)

Benefits:

- Retards aging
- Ensures a healthy liver by helping detoxify it of drugs and pollutants
- Ensures cell protection
- Defends the body against oxidative stress
- Performs other vital roles crucial to health.

Network boosters

Power to the max is what you get when you combine the antioxidant network with these boosters:

Flavonoids from the healing power of plants are nature's health wonders.

It prevents blood clots and helps improve sexual function in men. It is used in the treatment of attention deficit disorder and has anti-aging benefits.

Dosage: Gingko Biloba, 30 mg daily; Pycnogenol, 30 mg daily

Carotenoids help fight cancer, and prevent heart disease. Eat three oranges and yellow fruits and vegetables plus two dark green leafy vegetables daily or take a supplement. A popular carotenoid is lycopene found in tomatoes.

Selenium is a trace mineral that protects against cancer.

Dosage: 50-100 mg daily

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Health strategy

- Eat seven to 10 servings of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetable daily.
- Take tea (green, oolong or black) daily. Studies show green tea has highest benefits.
- Exercise daily (20-30 minutes brisk walking will do).
- Follow your antioxidant cocktail regimen.
- Adopt a positive attitude.

Morning:
Vitamin E
100 mg tocotrienols
200 mg mixed tocopherols
CoQ10 - 30 mg
Lipoic Acid - 250 mg ester C
Folic Acid - 400 mcg
Biotin - 300 mcg
Vitamin B6 - 2 mg
Afternoon/evening:
Vitamin E
200 mg natural alpha tocopherol
Lipoic Acid - 50 mg
Vitamin C - 250 mg ester C
Gingko Biloba - 30 mg
Selenium - 200 mcg.

Your antioxidant level

It is clear that the higher your antioxidant levels the healthier you are. You can know your antioxidant level with the BioPhotonic Nutrition Scanner. The process is non-invasive as it only involves a scan of your palm.

A blue laser light picks up the level of photons emitted by antioxidants in your tissue.

You can find out your antioxidation level in five minutes. Scanning sessions are held 5-7:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday, 26/F Trafalgar Plaza, H.V. dela Costa, Makati City.

Call Pharmanex at 0917-835122 (Rowena Balatbat) or 0917-811323 (Paula Llorando). It can also recommend a vitamin regimen that follows strictly Dr. Lester Packer's plan.

Your affirmation for the week:

"I love life. Let its energies flow through me."

Love and light!

Listen to "Ma Beauty Po Naman," p.m., Sunday, on dzMM; read my book "Forever Young," available at all National Book Store and Powerbooks

Sleepwalking is still a mystery

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

A FILIPINO housewife woke up one morning to find all the furniture in the living room completely rearranged. She asked everybody in the household who rearranged them but no one admitted to doing so.

So she put the pieces of furniture back in their former places. The next morning, she found they had been rearranged again.

This time she was really mad but everybody claimed not touching anything.

To solve the mystery and catch whoever was doing the rearranging, everyone agreed to take turns keeping watch all evening. After midnight, the watchers saw the same housewife walking in her sleep. She went straight to the living room and began rearranging the furniture, then she quietly went back to sleep.

No wonder she often complained of being tired in the morning, although she had just woken up from a deep sleep. When told she was the one rearranging her furniture, she couldn't believe it.

"What is somnambulism (or sleep walking)? Why do people walk in their sleep? Are there dangers to this? What can be done to prevent it?"

Common problem

These are questions often asked when I address professional and civic groups. Apparently a great number of people experience sleepwalking.

Medical science and even psychology cannot explain the phenomenon adequately. The only thing known is that during sleepwalking, the sensory motor nerve of a person remains active unlike in normal sleep.

Some scientists believe the cause has something to do with the emotional state of a person. This usually happens, they say, to people with emotional problems, a theory which is not supported by facts. Some people who are emotionally stable also sleepwalk.

For years I've looked for a rational explanation of the phenomenon but have not found one. Recently, somebody by the name of Lucilo Mandanas, who reads this column and listens to my radio program, lent me a rare book titled "Thinking and Destiny" by Harold W. Percival, published by The World Publishing Co. Inc. in New York in 1946.

Theory

In the chapter "Psychic Destiny," the author explained his theory on somnambulism that made a lot of sense to me.

He said: "Somnambulism is a state resulting usually from unintended self-suggestion. In somnambulism there is no intention to compel the body to do what it does later in the somnambulistic sleep. In that state the doer is in deep sleep, while its body walks, rides or climbs, often in dangerous places, and then returns to normal sleep in bed."

What causes it? "The cause of somnambulism," according to Percival, "is that the doer in the waking state thought of certain acts. These thoughts were impressed upon the breath-form (i.e. the soul).

"The physical body was restrained from doing the acts by the doer, which, though it wanted to do them, was prevented by the fear of danger or by conventionality. When the doer has retired and is in deep sleep and the body is no longer restrained, the breath-form, obeying the impression received, causes the physical body to do the acts.

"Whatever the senses and the organs do is merely the carrying out of the impression made by that thought. Somnambulistic walking is a concrete illustration of the exteriorization of a thought."

Prevention

How do we prevent sleepwalking? Percival said, "Somnambulism can be prevented by self-suggestion, that is, by forbidding the breath-form (or soul) to perform in sleep any such suggestions made to it in the waking state and charging it to awaken the doer if it should be impelled to carry out the impression."

I call this "brain programming," best done at the alpha level of the brain waves which is the meditative and passive state.

The above suggestion is certainly worth trying. There have been reports of sleepwalkers who cross busy streets without being run over, or walk on high window ledges without falling off.

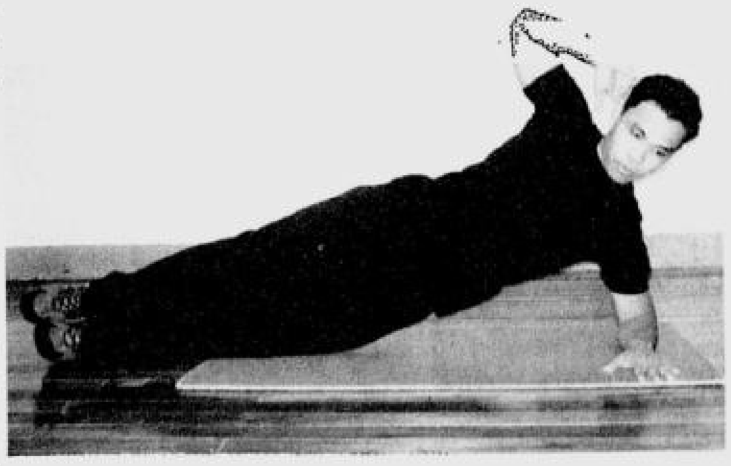
The reason such sleepwalkers do not get hurt, although they are performing these acts while completely asleep, is because their subconscious minds are awake and are guiding them. Nevertheless, these acts can be scary.

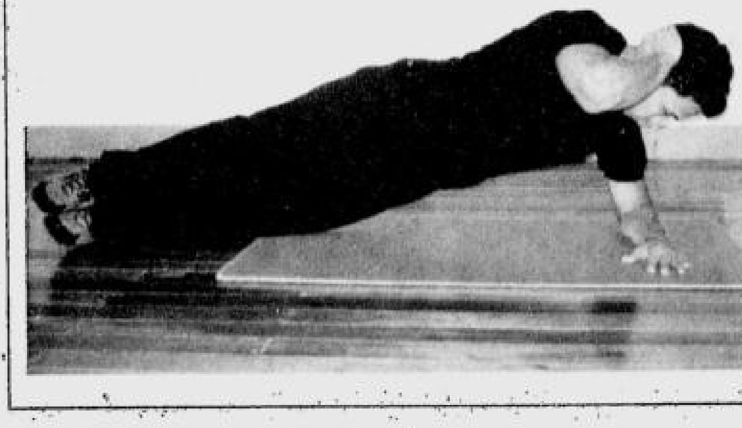
Readers who have a tendency to sleepwalk may want to try Percival's suggestion and tell me the results so we can let others know whether it works or not.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail: jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Rotating side plank





THIS variation of a yoga-inspired exercise strengthens all muscles of the torso—abdominals and lower back—as well as shoulders and legs.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie sideways with your elbow directly under your shoulder joint and your legs straight one on top of the other. Your other hand is behind your head.
2. Push your body upward so your full body weight is balanced between your elbow and the side of your bottom foot.
3. Rotate and bring your top elbow toward the floor.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Slowly lower yourself and switch sides.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advance exercise. You should already be familiar with a basic side plank. If not, go to www.tinajuanfitness.info/exercises/Side Plank.htm and practice the pre-requisite exercise for a few weeks before attempting this variation.
2. One way to reduce the intensity of the exercise is to bend your bottom leg.
3. Exhale as you rotate; inhale as you return to starting position.
4. Focus on rotating at the waist and not just on bringing your elbow in.

Repetitions:

Eight to 10

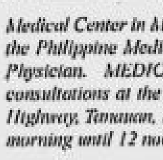
MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

What is rabies and what are its common symptoms?

Take Charge Doc!

Rabies is an acute viral disease of the central nervous system (CNS) caused by a rhabdovirus. It can affect mammals and is transmitted by infected secretions, usually by saliva through the bite of an infected animal. Occasionally, it is also transmitted through the ingestion or transplantation of infected tissues or contact with a virus-containing aerosol. In the Philippines, Africa, Southeast Asia, Indian subcontinent and tropical South America, this disease is common.

Rabies has an incubation period which ranges from seven days to less than one year (mean period between one to two months). Its clinical manifestations includes a prodrome period of fever, headache, malaise, anorexia, nausea, vomiting and sore throat which lasts for one to four days followed by periods of excessive motor activity, excitation and agitation. Mental confusion, hallucinations, muscle spasms, seizures, focal paralysis and eventually coma soon appear. Excessive sensitivity to bright light, loud noise, touch and even gentle breezes are also very common signs of rabies infection. Fear of water (hydrophobia) and fear of air (aerophobia) are seen in about two-thirds of cases.



This week's answer to our feature question on rabies was provided by one of the recent additions to MEDICard's team of top-notch medical doctors, Dr. Noemi Jane Pabon. Doc Pabon is a 1995 Medicine graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. She specializes in Internal Medicine, finishing her residency at the Dr. Victor R. Potenciano Medical Center in Mandaluyong City. Doc Noemi is affiliated with the Philippine Medical Association and the Philippine College of Physician. MEDICard members may visit her for their needed consultations at the Daniel O. Mercado General Hospital, Laurel Highway, Tanauan, Batangas, from Sundays to Thursdays, 9 in the morning until 12 noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC · 9th floor [illegible] Building H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227
Trunkline: 867-2020 Fax No.: 864 8720, 810-3668 Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4827 (Smart & Talk N' Text) E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com

INCOMING Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco and equestrienne Mikee Cojuangco Jaworski with Shu Uemura's Tina Tinio

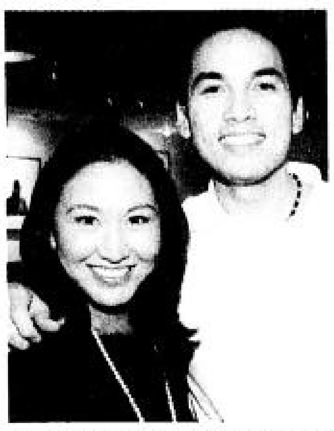
SECRETARY Roberto Pagdanganan and Ting-ting Cojuangco

COOL couple. Congressman Edmund Reyes and Camille R.

CONGRESSMAN Butch Pichay and Chim Esteban

A wow birthday party

PAPA and mama to be: LJ and Kit Gordon


ARE they just pals or what? Pretty, pretty equestrienne Toni Leviste and ABS-CBN's Paolo Pineda

EYE-CATCHING southern gals, Globe Platinum's Celine Jalandoni, Cebu Pacific's Leigh Carcel and Jewelmer's most prized pearl Angela Poblador, with Duty Free Philippines' young GM, Michael Kho

GAL and guy of the hour: Birthday celebrators Carissa Coscolluela and Armand Arreza with the host, Sen. Dick Gordon

IT WAS one of those long nights of great munchies, real cool company and endlessly flowing booze. A birthday party for brilliant young royalette **Carissa Oledan Coscolluela** and handsome hardworking Tourism Undersecretary **Armand Arreza** was hosted by no less than the man who never ceases to wow us all, Senator **Richard "Dick" Gordon**, at the excellent but still little known Cantinetta, along Pasong Tamo Extension in Makati.

With all the super namedroppables in the room, *palanggas*, you could feel the power and success reverberating from within the great little Italian resto!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Huddled in one power table with Dick G. were Tourism Secretary **Ace Durano**; Philippine International Trading Corporation chair and CEO **Roberto Pagdanganan**; former congressman and incoming Philippine Olympic Committee president **Peping Cojuangco**, who breezed in with his gorgeous wife, cucumber-cool **Ting-ting**; and Surigao Rep. **Prospero Pichay Jr.**

Having a blast were young movers and shakers like Mr. Charmer himself, Marinduque Congressman **Dennis Mendiola**; banker Paey Reyes; ABS-CBN's **Paolo Pineda**, with his hip younger brother, **Carlo P.**; sugar baron **Michael Chua**; and international trader **Dexter Dy**.

Engaged in girl-talk was the close-knit gang of four, Carissa C.'s bosom equestrienne pals, internationally acclaimed **Toni Leviste**; Asian Games gold medalist, **Mikee Cojuangco Jaworski**; and Shu Uemura's brilliant gal, **Tina Tinio**, no less. Chatting with the gent endlessly on the move, Supah! **Tim Yap**, were now proud new parents **LJ** and **Kit Gordon**.

PARTY dudes: Carlo Pineda and Michael James Chua

YOUNG lawyer Ferdie Hernandez

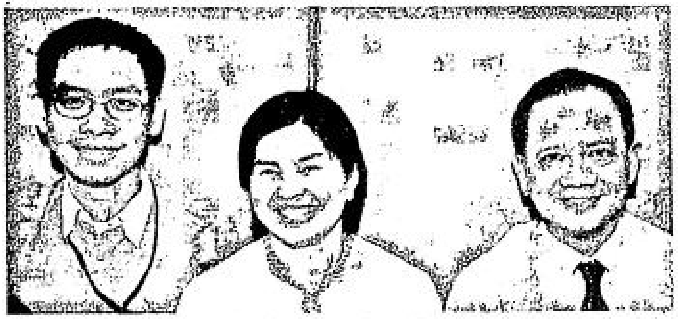
Helping entertain the magnum personas were Carissa C.'s long-time beau, handsome lawyer **Ferdie Hernandez**, and her father, Southern gentleman **Buji C.**, plus **Armand A.**'s ivory-skinned wife, **Papat A.**; his parents, well-respected **Andy** and **Pressy A.**; and siblings **Arnel** and **Pamela**.

Praises were heaped on retail hotshot **Chim Esteban**, one of Cantinetta's owners, for the excellent food that consisted of an extensive antipasti buffet, followed by two sitdown yummy courses. The dessert buffet was, *naturellement*, absolutely sinful!

CITIBANK'S hotshot executives—vice president Sonya Perez, marketing director Cecille Fonacier, cards business director Michellina Triwardhany and vice president Bea Tan

Attacking the great food, booze and wine were popular gentlemen, financial whiz Yazzy **Tanjutco Moya**, lawyer **Inky Reyes**, the country's water regulatory czar **Dondi Alikpala**, and young businessman **Mike Sicat**. Successful SMS entrepreneur **Raymond Nocon** and his wife **Jeanette**; super smart lawyer **Monch Agregado** and his wife **Aimee**; Smart Telecoms executive **Jerome Almirante**, and MIT- trained engineer **Darwin Salipsip** raved about the tremendously fun happening, *palanggas*.

It was certainly a hectic week for Carissa C. and her gang. The week started with the birthday girl's super treat to a long weekend at the über private spa resort in idyllic San Vicente, Sta. Ana, Cagayan, of gentleman for all season, **Vic Vic Villavicencio.**


GANG of three: Citibank's Lawrence Lee, Connie Barcenas and Benjie Oliva

Joining the gang there were Rustan's scion, Stanford-educated **Dino Pineda** and his tall exotic wife, **Marivic P**, with their two children. (Sorry, *palanggas*, the fab spa-resort is open only to *famille* and close pals.)

To the celebrators, here's to another fab year, filled with tons of success and prosperity! And to the host of the bash, Dick G., keep the wow coming, Senator!

SEN. Dick Gordon with Presy, Arnel, Armand, Andy and Papat Arreza

Rewarding spending

Hey, what's the best way to reward spending? Well, for Citibank, the answer is simple: Give back a portion of what was spent. Cool.

RAM Antonio and Tourism Secretary Ace Durano

Yes, *palanggas*, with the Citibank Cash Back Card, the country's first dedicated cash back card, you will get back a portion of what you spent.

Wazzup Wazzup hosts **Drew Arellana** and **Bianca Valerio** beautifully hosted the fun affair. We were treated to the premiere showing of the card's fab TV commercial, which explained what the card was all about.

"The response in different countries around Asia has been very encouraging and we hope to replicate these successes in the Philippines," says **Michellina Triwardhany**.

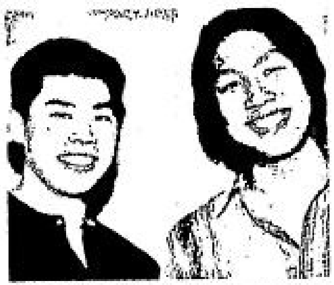
Okey, dig this, *palanggas*. The new innovation from Citibank gives members a minimum of 0.5 percent cash rebate on all card charges. What's more, if the cardholder decides not to pay all of his outstanding balance for the month, he gets to earn a higher cash back balance for the month, based on a tiered rate structure: 1 percent for outstanding amounts between P2,500-P14,999; 1.5 percent for P15,000-P44,999; and 2.5 percent for amounts over P45,000. Get it? *Moi* did.

Making the offer more tempting is a promotion that gives cardholders a bonus 3 percent cash rebate on dining expenses, utility bills and tuition fees on top of the regular cash rebate. The promo is good until June 30.

"At Citibank, we are always looking for ways to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers. The new Citibank Cash Back Card is our way of meeting the needs of cardholders as well as rewarding them for their loyalty," said **Nina Aguas**, Citibank's country business manager for Global Consumer Group.

Interested? Check out Citibank, *palanggas*.

SUPER emcees: Wazzup Wazzup's Drew Arellano and Bianca Valerio


GUARDIANS of China's culinary heritage: Eugene Tan (left) and Steve Ong, the brilliant achievers behind the innovative China Star restaurant

PINK Magazine's Jane Kingsu and Angela Ignacio and Food Magazine's Cherie Mijares couldn't get enough of the sumptuous lunch.

A star is born

Though it was a bright sunny day, but at the launch of a new star, the China Star restaurant at Market! Market!, it rained with surprises, *palanggas*. We had a fabulous time as new life was breathed into time-honored recipes, using today's cooling techniques. That was the biggest surprise of all!

The invitees didn't feast on the usual Chinese dishes. Hong Kong-born chef, talented **Yu Sin Keung,** wove culinary magic with the must-try melt-in-your-mouth Taiwanese marinated pork in beggar pot, the house specialty; and crisp salad seafood rolls, to mention a few.

Owned and managed by a group of hotshot young achievers and smart restaurateurs, led by Atenean **Eugene Tan**, the lunch was a preview of what can be experienced at China Star's two other outlets at the Podium and Alabang Town Center.

The resto was ablaze with red when the doors were opened: curtains, ornaments, and *cheongsams* worn by pretty Chinese-looking gals. And at the end of what seemed like a maze a Chinese seer waited for us. We were each asked to roll a dice then our fortune for the coming year was told. Farther into the maze, a live Buddha in a flowing red robe sat on a red pedestal.

At the next stop, a Chinese lady, **Marilyn Lee**, wrote our names in Chinese characters.

At the second floor, invitees saw the sleek lines of a more modern Asia, a handiwork of top architect **Gil Coscolluela**, no less, of the prestigious firm W.V. Coscolluela and Associates.

Model-actor **Kenji Marquez** was the emcee, while his model-stylist **Pazzy Navarro**, worked behind the scene painting the faces of the young male dancers. Chinese geomancer Dr. **So Chaw Yee** held one-on-one fortune telling sessions.

Eugene's partner and pal, **Steve Ong**, beamed from ear to ear with the successful launch, dahlings. The Makati-based popular PR firm, Geiser Maclang was behind the well-organized happening.

ANC's Paul Henson asks geomancer Dr. So Chaw Yee what the Year of the Rooster has in store for him.

HONG KONG-born chef Yu Siu Keung weaves his culinary magic at China Star.

EMCEE Kenji Marquez with wife, Pazzy Navarro (left), and calligrapher Marilyn Lee

Messages

I CONGRATULATE the Philippine Marketing Association for its continuing efforts to promote marketing excellence through its annual event dubbed as Agora Youth Awards.

I welcome this annual search for the most outstanding students and student marketing organizations nationwide as a testament to your firm commitment to advance marketing in our country. It cannot fail to inspire you more in developing the next generation of marketing professionals.

Marketing is crucial to our efforts to increase production and create jobs. It includes strengthening our relationship with other countries, as well as promoting the Philippines for tourism and investment purposes. I therefore call on you to persevere in spreading the good news about our country though your various marketing programs.

Though our combined efforts, we hope to give our countrymen more, opportunities to lift themselves from poverty and make their lives better. Join me in facing up to the challenges of ensuring a more prosperous country for our people

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

CONGRATULATIONS to this year's Agora Youth Awardees. You have been chosen from over 100 entries to become what the industry considers as the future of marketing.

The Agora Youth is an annual recognition given to outstanding marketing students and the top marketing organization for the year. Now on its 15th year, the Agora Youth is the highest distinction given to marketing and management students to acknowledge their firm grasp of marketing and mastered the convergence of theory and practice as they go out to the corporate world.

To the national finalists, I salute you for a job well done. You have hurdled a grueling case study presentation and defense, where only the positive unanimous decision of the judges gave you the right to be an Agora Youth awardee.

To the parents and educators, I applaud your efforts in supporting your sons, daughters and students. I personally believe that the success of a student will always come from strong foundations at home and in school.

Let me leave all the winners with one thought expressed by author and social scientist Leo Rosten, which I hope will inspire you as you venture into the corporate world. He said, "I cannot believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be compassionate. It is, above all, to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all."

Future marketers, make your mark. Congratulations.

DONALD PATRICK LIM
President
Philippine Marketing Association

THE PHILIPPINE Marketing Association's Agora has always been synonymous to a quest for excellence. The Agora Youth Awards just took a step forward, finding and instilling excellence at very young years, finding maturity and intelligence in near or the most faraway places. This year's Agora Youth Awardees deserve accolade both from their peers and their superiors. They toiled, they persevered, they sacrificed. Even during their freshman years it was evident that they were serious about life yet not forgetting to have fun. They dreamt big and made those dreams reality. Let it not be said that the Agora Youth Awards paved the way from them, rather let it be known that they themselves created opportunities by which doors will be open wide for them wherever they go because their life as it unfolds has been built on the strong foundations of excellence, integrity and honor.

Congratulations

VIRGILIO G. AJERO
VP Youth & Academe
Philippine Marketing Association

SALUTATIONS:..

Marketing convergence—the theme of this year's Agora Youth Awards is a challenge that has come of age.

Times, conditions and the people's taste continually changes. The target market now requires deeper understanding, more meticulous approach and a rather unorthodox style.

The various marketing techniques and tactics that have proven to be successful through the years and the technological advancements available to us, stare at our eyes and dare us to excel much more.

The Agora Youth Awards set you off on this path and prepare you for the uncharted waters ahead.

The 15th Agora Youth Awards—which is the pinnacle of marketing excellence among marketing students, is proud to screen, this year, more than 130 entries from 30 colleges and universities nationwide.

Through the Agora Youth Awards the Philippine Marketing Association recognizes the country's most outstanding marketing students and organizations.

Dream. Believe. Survive.

We thank all those who dreamed... and participated. Your participation provided us the inspiration to move on.

We congratulate all those who believed ... and qualified. Your faith in yourselves and us as marketers made us one.

We salute all those who survived... and won. Your achievements made us proud.

To all of you, may you continue to inspire others with your Agora Star—the symbol of marketing excellence. Congratulations!

EDWIN C. MAPANAO
Overall Chairman
2005 Agora Youth Awards

THE AGORA Youth Awards have proven crucial in exposing, and developing, young marketers. And this year's participants have admiringly shown their knowledge and proficiency in the principles and skills of marketing. The awardees' impressive case arguments show their heightened level of critical thinking.

This year's selection and judging processes were challenging in themselves. It was also exhilarating and inspiring to be among those who exhaustively looked at the future of Philippine marketing.

My full support goes to this noble program. With this, the skills and knowledge of our country's young marketers are continuously improved and honed. And this only leads to more new ideas, an infinite stream of creativity that can do wonders for our country.

GERARD F. PENAFLOR
ICMarketing Head-Foodservices
Nestle Philippines Inc.
Chair, Board of Judges
2005 Agora Youth Awards

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

2005 Agora Youth Awards

Perez and Gabriel top 2005 Agora Youth Awards

ENTREPRENEURIAL spirit. Marketing savvy. Academic excellence. Social responsibility. Love for country.

These are just some of the enviable attributes that set apart This year's regional winners of the 2005 Agora Youth Awards. Indeed, the cream of the crop.

Chris Gabriel is a 3rd year marketing management student in De La Salle University. He is a 1st Honor's Dean's Lister from his entire stay in DLSU. He is the eldest among a brood of three and the son of engineer Ramoncito J. Gabriel and Consuelo R. Gabriel.

He is the president of the Junior Entrepreneurs' Marketing Association (Jema).

He had set his sights on the competition ever since he entered DLSU, as he found out that the contest was the premiere competition for marketeers in the Philippines.

A Business Administration (BS BA) student of UP Diliman, Jemilee Perez is graduating Magna cum Laude and is one of the top students of the batch. Jemilee considers being the community service head of a socio-civic organization last school year as the one extracurricular activity in college dearest to her.

Jemilee was one of the students who represented UP in PMA's First Strategic Marketing Competition last year where UP was among the top six teams. From over 4,000 students nationwide, Jemilee was also chosen as one of the top 25 marketing management trainees by Markf-Prof Foundation Inc. At the end of the seven-weekend boot camp, she graduated batch valedictorian.

The whole experience leading up to becoming one of the National Finalists for the 2005 Agora Youth Awards was both exciting and challenging for Jemilee, believing that it not only broadened her knowledge but also heightened her passion and appreciation for marketing.

Nicandro M. Falcis II and Charlene Alice C. Coyukiat of the College of Business Administration of the University of the Philippines-Diliman are headed for magna cum laude honors and look at the Agora Youth Awards as a chance to give back what they have received as government scholars.

Kalinga native Eisenhower Bucalen of the Central Luzon State University and Dennis Limitares and Arianne Jane Sulla of the Mindanao State University, on the other hand, see the award as an opportunity to showcase what they have already achieved as outstanding youth leaders in their schools, with a heart for the less privileged.

These and the 11 other regional winners of the 2005 Agora Youth Awards have another thing in common—a wellspring of marketing ideas that has caught the attention of big local and multinational companies.

The Philippine Marketing Association mounted the Agora Youth Awards to recognize the best and the brightest Filipino marketing students today. Started in 1991 and initially called Tomas Tosma or The Outstanding Marketing Students and Three Outstanding Student Marketing Associations, the Agora Youth Awards has already recognized over 100 outstanding marketing students.

It takes after the prestigious Agora Awards that select the best among the marketing professionals and the academe.

Peith Salva, one of the first winners of the search, now teaches at the Far Eastern University; Marco Montes, a winner in 1992, is now vice president for Luzon of Cocolife, while Karla Soliman is now with Procter and Gamble. Other winners are now with big companies such as Splash and San Miguel Corp. Completing this year's list of regional winners are Aislinn Y. Chuahiock, Mario Y. Lozano of DLSU Manila; and Nathaniel Sy of CKSC for the National Capital Region. Luzon winners are Ramon Arcilla of UNC, Abel dela Cruz, Angelyn Duque of Central Luzon State University and Paulou G. Javier of DLSU. Visayas winners are Ma. Corazon Fatima Maquiling and Martin Angelo Sunaz of UPV Iloilo. The Philippine Marketing Association, in cooperation with the Association of Marketing Educators and the Federation of Junior Marketing Association, chose the regional winners based on their project involvement, awards and recognition, documents presentation and written marketing case analysis of retail giant SM. The national winners, meanwhile, were judged solely on their marketing strategy presentation on the liquor brand "Malice", a case study from the Asian Institute of Management Feb. 21 at the Richmonde Hotel. National judges were marketing veterans Donald Lim from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Ricky Alegre from Aliw Publishing House Inc/Graphics Magazine and Gerard Penaflor from Nestlé Philippines Ice Cream Division. Truly, this year's batch of winners gives flesh to the idea that the future of marketing in the Philippines has never been better.

AGORA YOUTH AWARDS

Outstanding Marketing Students

Valedictorians

JEMILEE T. PEREZ
UP Diliman

CHRIS D. GABRIEL
De La Salle University Manila

3 Outstanding Student Marketing Associations

- Junior Entrepreneurs Marketing Association (DLSU-Manila)
- Ateneo Junior Marketing Association
- UP-Visayas Marketing Society

AISLINN GAIL Y. CHUAHIOCK
De La Salle University Manila

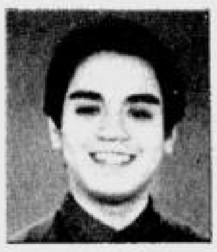
MARIO Y. LOZANO
De La Salle University Manila

MARTIN ANGELO L. SUNAS
UP Visayas

MA CORAZON FATIMA MAQUILING
UP Visayas

CHARLENE ALICE C. COYUKIAT
UP Diliman

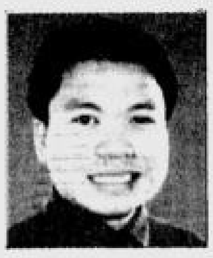
Regional Awardees



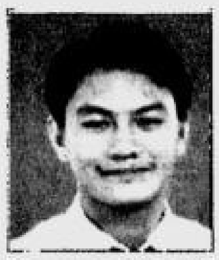
NICARDO M. FALCIS II
UP Diliman

NATHANIEL K. SY
Chiang Kai Shek College

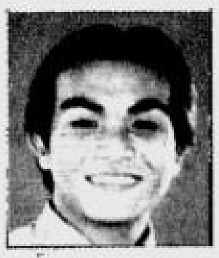
RAMON V. ARCILA, JR.
University of Nueva Caceres Naga



PAULO G. JAVIER
De La Salle University Dasmarinas

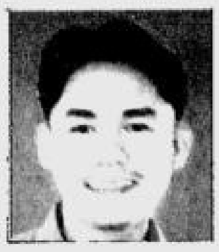


ABEL S. DELA CRUZ
Central Luzon State University



EISENHOWER C. BUCALEN
Central Luzon State University

ANGELYNE Y. DUQUE
Central Luzon State University



DENNIS E. LIMITARES
Mindanao State University

ARIANNE JANEL SULLA
Mindanao State Univ.

Board of Judges

National Judges

DONALD PATRICK LIM
President
Philippine Marketing Association

GERARD PENAFLOR
IC Marketing Head
Nestle Ice Cream

RICKY ALEGRE
Vice President, Sales
Aliw Publishing House

Regional Judges

DR. FELIX M. LAO
Consultant
United Laboratories Inc.

VIRGILIO G. AJERO
Marketing Manager
Chowking Foods Corp.

RAFAEL F. VILLANUEVA
President
Harbortown Hotel Management

EDWIN C. MAPANAO
Marketing Director
Sarimanok Feeds

EDITH DYCHIAO
Vice President
Banco de Oro

VIVIAN FAUSTINO
AVP
International Exchange Bank

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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JOJO AJERO
VP for Youth/ Academe
Philippine Marketing Association

EDWIN C. MAPANAO
Overall Chair
2005 Agora Youth Awards

RUBY T. RAMORES
Co-Chair
2005 Agora Youth Awards

RAFFY P. VILLANUEVA
Search Chair

MARY PAITHABAÑO
Program

GRANT BULAONG
Staging

REGIONAL winners at Richmonde Hotel during the final judging Feb. 21 with Ruby Ramores and Edwin Mapanao.

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION
AGORA YOUTH AWARDS

3 OUTSTANDING STUDENT MARKETING ASSOCIATIONS
From left, Angel Maquiling and Pauline Divinagracia of UPV Marketing Club, Cesca Sylvestre of UPJMA, Linfred Tau of Aima and Martin Suñaz of UP Visayas

REGIONAL winners at the Makati Stock Exchange with Janzen Marquez of Asiasec Equities Inc and Edwin Mapanao of Thunderbird

MARKETING CONVERGENCE

Marketing Institute of the Philippines
The Education and Training Arm of the
PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Presents a seminar on

BASICS OF MARKETING A TO Z

March 2, 3 & 4, 2005
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati

This seminar helps clear the confusion and jumble in marketing. Thus, it aims to give marketing executives the essential concepts and tools needed to design exceptional marketing programs and effectively function as marketing practitioners.

Target Participants

This seminar is specifically designed for those who may already be doing a marketing management function but whose academic preparation is not marketing. They can be front-line, mid- and upper-level managers in brand management, sales, customer relations, advertising, promotions, media and public relations.

Seminar Objectives

At the end of this seminar on Basics of Marketing A to Z, participants will know the key marketing concepts like the macro and micro of marketing, 4P's (product, place, price and promotion), consumer behavior and target marketing.

Methodology

Lectures, exercises, and in-class application projects relate specifically to the workplace, hence, participants can immediately apply new concepts and skills. Resource speakers are multi-awarded marketing practitioners who will share their experiences and insights about the Basics of Marketing.

SEMINAR PROGRAM
Day 1 – March 2, 2005 (Wednesday)
Introductory Session – 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Basic Business and Marketing concepts
Session Chair: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac
Professor, San Beda College
Session 1 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm
The Enigma of Marketing Mix in Today's Business Environment
Speaker: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac
Professor, San Beda Collage
Session 2 – 3:45-5:30 pm
How Consumer Analysis Affects Business Strategy
Speaker: Mr. Ricardo de Vera
President, Pin Point Direct Marketing
BRIEFING ON THE FINAL PROJECT – 5:45 – 6:00 pm

Day 2 – March 3, 2005 (Thursday)
Link Up Session - 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Session 3 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Crucial Areas in Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning
Speaker: Ms. Ma. Teresa V. Gargantiel*
Senior Executive Officer, Jimenez Basic
Session 4 - 3:45 – 5:30 pm
Mapping the Winning Strategies for Tougher Times
Speaker: Ms. Vivian Faustino
Assistant Vice President
International Exchange Bank
BRAINSTORMING – 5:30 – 6:00 PM

Day 3 – March 4, 2005 (Friday)
Link Up Session – 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Session 5 - 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Connecting with your Consumers through Effective Communication
Speaker: MR. ANTONIO S. VENTOSA*
Managing Director, Leo-Burnett
PRESENTATION OF CASES/SUMMATION – 3:45 – 5:30 pm

*speaker to be confirmed

FOR INQUIRIES:
Pls. call 634-5722, 6344890 or 6361451

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'The Five Ps of Leadership and Marketing Excellence'

(Excerpt of the keynote address given on the occasion of the Agora Youth Awards for Marketing, Feb. 23, 2005 at the Philippine Stock Exchange Penthouse.)

AS WE say at coachcom.inc, my executive and corporate coaching company, "we are in the business of creating champions." Allow me to champion two things tonight: The effort of the Philippine Marketing Association to acknowledge the value of recognizing top-notch marketing work of college students by staging this awards night; the presence of the students and parents who are with us here

You see, I firmly believe that 50 percent of success in life lies in showing up. If you show up, you give yourself a chance.

I am neither a leadership expert nor a management guru; neither am I a marketing specialist. What I am is simply a coach who has had the good fortune of being around great leaders and mentors through the past 22 years of coaching.

Public relations a 'P'

Allow me then to share with you what I have learned about leadership through these years.

My topic tonight centers on the 5Ps of Leadership.

According to Stephen Covey, Leadership is a choice, not a position. To this I add that the first act of leadership lies in taking the risk to lead. More than anything, I believe that leadership springs from within. Chris Lowney writes that it is about who we are as much as it is about what we do. And this is the first P, the Product of Leadership.

The Product of Leadership is a deep understanding of who we are. I believe that a leader's most compelling leadership tool is who he or she is; a person who understands what he or she values and wants.

Legendary Nike founder Phil Knight explains how their ad agency, Kennedy and Wieden helped build the special image of the Nike brand: "They spend countless hours trying to figure out what the product is, what the message is, what the theme is, what the athletes want, what emotion is involved. They try to extract something that's meaningful, an honest message that is true to who we are."

The second P is Price. If we are to be true leaders, we must be willing to pay the price. And the price of great leadership is being the leader people today want. Ken Blanchard says that what generation XYZ is looking for in leaders today are three things—Integrity, Partnership, Affirmation.

'Walking the talk'

Integrity is about walking the talk. It's about earning the respect of people because what you say and what you do are one and the same.

Partnership is about the relationship you build with your team. Great leaders are great team builders because they are great team players.

Finally, people today are looking for Affirmation from their leaders. They want to be known as human beings, not just a number identified by the company ID. Leaders must learn to catch people doing things right.

The third P is Place. I submit that the place of leadership is right here, right now. That place is the present. Not tomorrow. Not when you graduate. And that place, to quote an article written by PMA president Donald Lim, lies in the Zone of Convergence. Mr. Lim says that this convergence brings about three issues that every marketer should prepare for.

The first is the shift from product innovation to customer service innovation. Organizations should no longer look at product superiority as their core business advantage, but focus instead on satisfying the customer. However, today everyone espouses customer service. I submit instead that we endeavor to create "Raving Fans." These are the customers who will serve as your sales force, who can't stop talking about how happy they are.

'Competition as multidimensional'

The second issue is to recognize that competition now has become multidimensional. Time was when Jollibee's main competitor was McDonald's. Now it is also Pasa Load or Share-a-Load, as teenagers are skipping that burger to save up to load up.

The third issue is about creating an organizational marketing climate within the company. Mr. Lim says that Marketing today should no longer be the low man on the totem pole after operations and sales. Instead, more organizations are transforming their companies into a marketing company. Today, marketing must be everyone's job.

We must address these three issues within the zone of convergence.

In traditional marketing, the fourth "P" of the marketing mix is promotions. Allow me today to replace it with one of its components, Public Relations. By PR I refer to People Skills. Teddy Roosevelt says that the single, most important ingredient to the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people. Please do not forget the importance of your people skills.

I started coaching at the age of 29, and the very first tournament I coached, we won the championship right away, making me the youngest coach then to win a championship in his very first try. In the four years I coached for that team, we went to six Finals series and won two championships, earning me my first Coach-of-the-Year award in the process. And yet they fired me.

Why? Simply because I got so caught up in my accomplishments and coaching "genius" that I forgot the most important thing: my players. I treated them as simply that—just players, until things got so bad that two teams decided to terminate my services in spite of my winning record because the players could no longer stomach the coach I had become.

For the last "P" let me deviate from the traditional marketing mix and talk about Passion. This is the heart of leadership. It is about loving what you do so much that it fuels your level of commitment. Always follow your passion. It is the path to great happiness in life.

I believe that we are all leaders. For leadership is influence, and we influence someone everyday. In big ways and in small; hopefully always in a positive manner.

To the students, I ask you to seize this opportunity. Dare to dream big dreams. I assure you; there will be no losers. Apply yourselves. Commit. Execute. Take the shot.

CHOT REYES
Head Coach, Philippine National Basketball Team
CEO, coachcom.inc
coachot@pldtdsl.net
Tel: (632) 6873667
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ASSOCIATION
AWARDS 2005

AT THE AWARDS NIGHT
From left, Raffy Villanueva, Gerard Peñaflor, Ruby Ramores, Donald Lim, Edwin Mapanao with the two valedictorians Chris Gabriel and Jem Perez

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SEVEN AWARDEES
Aislinn Chuahiock, Jem Perez, Mario Lozano, Martin Suñaz, Chris Gabriel, Charlene Coyukiat and Angel Maquiling

EDUCATIONAL TOUR AT NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES
Cindy Banaria of Nestlé Philippines, Edwin Mapanao and Ruby Ramores with the 2005 Agora Youth awardees

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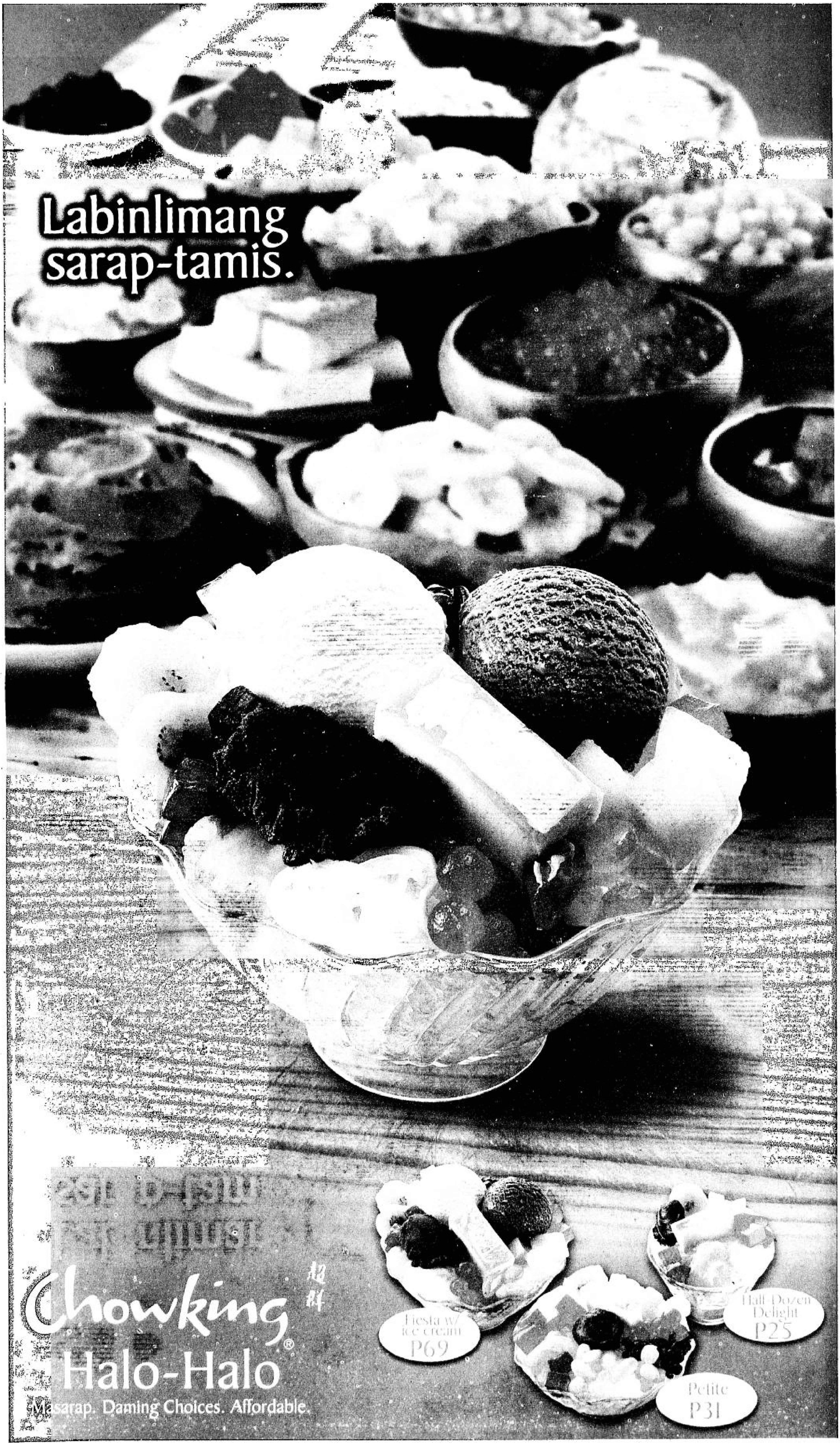
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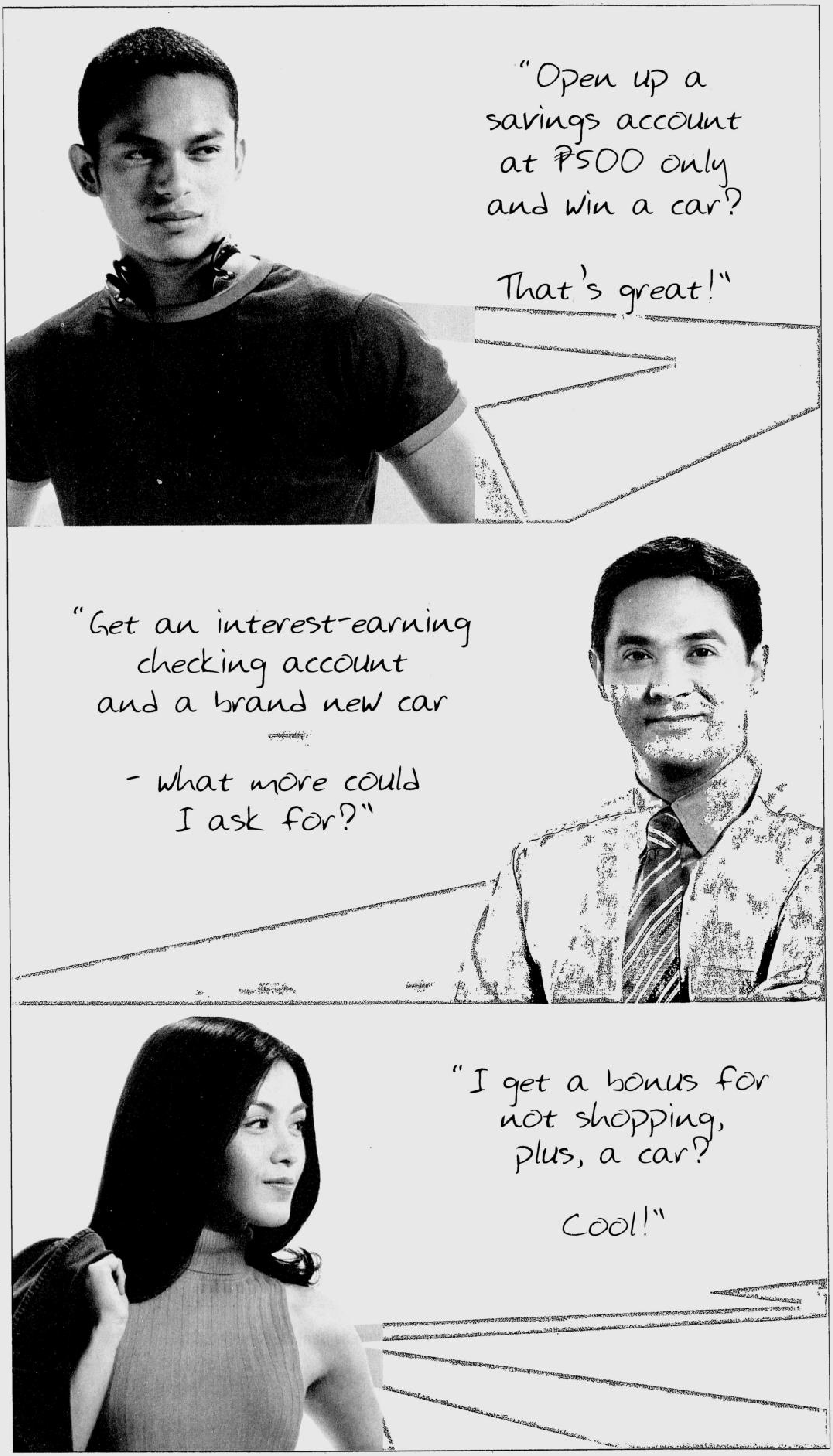
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Promo Mechanics:

1. This raffle promotion is open to all BPI and BPI Family Savings Bank peso deposit individual accountholders nationwide who open or are maintaining any of the participating deposit accounts during the promo period. Promo runs from March 1 to August 31, 2005.
2. Every month, a computer-generated raffle number will be assigned for every P5,000 Month-to-Date Average Daily Balance (MTD ADB) maintained in any of the following deposit accounts, whether existing or opened during the promo period:

   Express Teller Savings
   Express Teller Checking
   Platinum Savings
   Platinum for Kids
   Multi-Earner
   Multi-Earner Plus
   Maxi-One
   Regular Passbook Savings
   BPI Direct Savings
   BPI Direct Checking

3. An additional computer-generated raffle number will be issued to every new account opened during the promo period.
4. There will be 3 Bi-Monthly Draws where we will be giving away a BMW 1 Series per draw.

	Transaction Period	Draw Date
First Draw	March 1 to April 30, 2005	May 12, 2005
Second Draw	May 1 to June 30, 2005	July 14, 2005
Third Draw	July 1 to August 31, 2005	September 15, 2005

5. To win, an account drawn during the bi-monthly draws must meet the following:
   - For accounts already existing at the start of the promo, the ADB of the account for the period covered should have increased by at least P5,000 from its January 31, 2005 MTD ADB and should not be lower than the maintaining balance requirement of the account.
   - For accounts opened during the promo period, the ADB of the account for the period covered should not be lower than the maintaining balance requirement of the account.
6. During the Bi-Monthly Draws, a Special Draw will be held for customers who made a monetary transaction through the following channels: Express Phone, Express Online and Express Connect. To win, the client must be an active user of the channel at the time of draw.

Channel	No. of Winners	Prize
Express Phone	3 per draw	P20,000 each
Express Online	3 per draw	P20,000 each
Express Connect	3 per draw	P20,000 each

7. Client can win more than once in all the draws provided he/she meets the requirement in each period covered.
8. All raffle draws will be held at the 15/F BPI Head Office, Ayala Avenue, Makati City at 10am on the specified draw dates. Draws will be done in the presence of authorized representatives from DTI and BPI. Representatives from BPI would include BPI Deposits Marketing, Channel Managers and Audit.
9. Taxes on prizes will be shouldered by BPI. However, cost of registration is for the account of the winner.
10. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
11. Winners will be notified by registered mail. The complete list of winners will be published in a major newspaper of general circulation.
12. Winners of BMW cars can claim their prize at Prestige Cars Makati, Inc., 2324 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City, Philippines, with prior arrangement with a BPI representative. When claiming, client should present notification letter and one (1) valid ID.
13. For the Channel Draws, we will credit the winners' accounts within 2 weeks from draw date.
14. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of BPI upon approval of DTI.
15. All accounts that are dormant, closed/terminated, under litigation or garnished on or prior to crediting/awarding of prizes shall be disqualified.
16. All employees of BPI Unibank, its PR and advertising agency, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from the promo.
17. In case of dispute, the decision of BPI Unibank, with the concurrence of DTI, shall be deemed final.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0462 Series of 2005.

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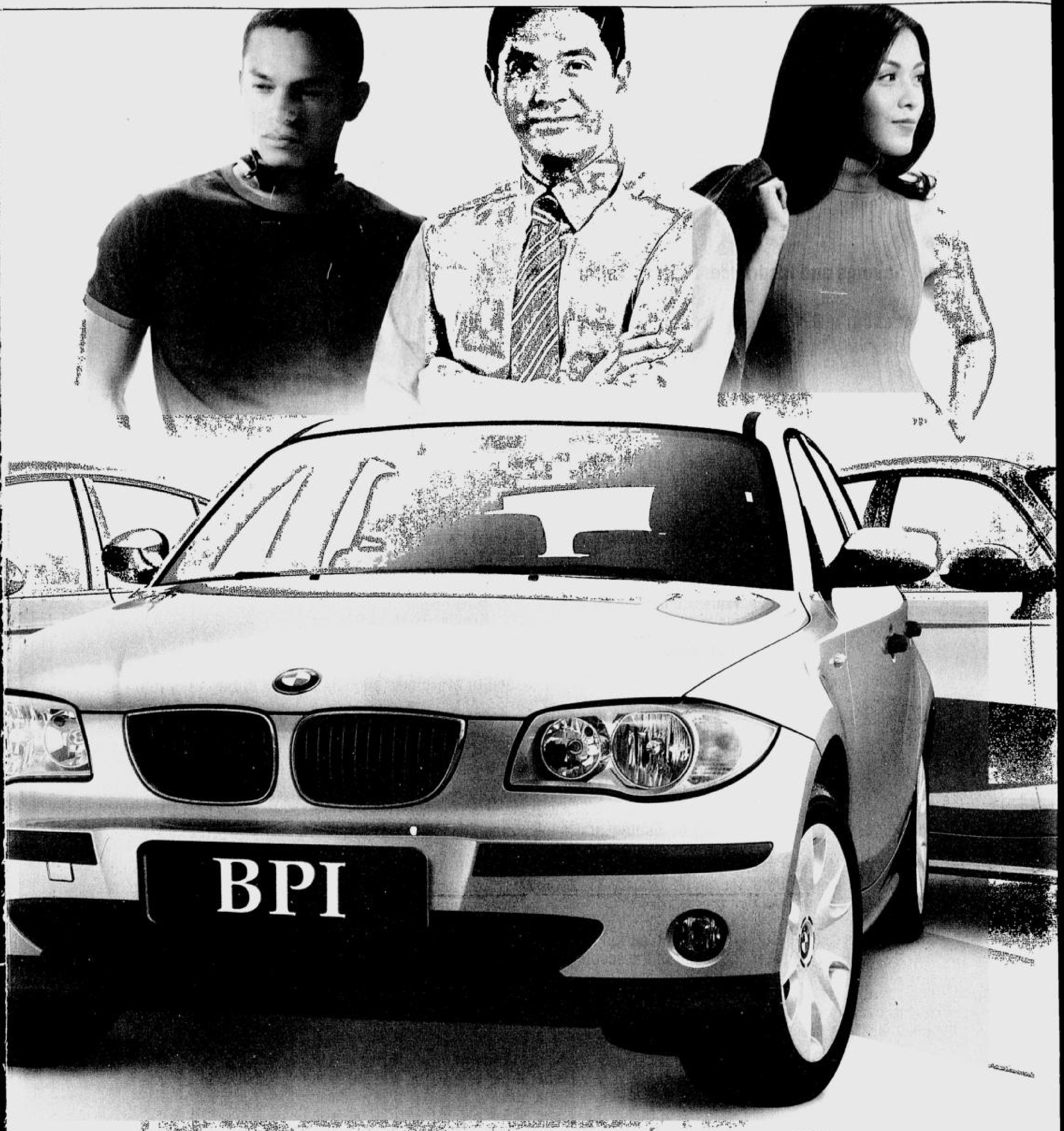

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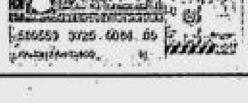
(Should be users of Express Phone, Express Connect and Express Online at the time of draw)

Promo runs from March 1 to August 31, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0462 Series of 2005. See flyers for details.

Get a chance to win a BMW every two months!



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